



**Isis on the march**

**Ramadi, Palmyra... what next for the conquerors?**

12.06.2015

# Newsweek®

## THE GREAT MELT BEGINS

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and the Eskimos ask if the world is ending

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# Newsweek

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# Newsweek

12.06.2015 NO.24



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## Editor's letter

## Writing with interest



**Richard Addis**  
editor@newsweek.com

At any gathering the astute reader of *Newsweek* should be among the most interesting people in the room. Crucial, though, is how you define interesting; for us, this has more to do with the original "making a difference" than the modern "attention-grabbing".

Making a difference is sometimes grimly serious, as in two of our feature stories this week.

In the first, our reporter Lynnley Browning travels to Alaska, to see for herself

the ravages caused by global warming.

In the second our writer Bill Powell talks to military insiders post the fall of Ramadi, about the disastrous US-led efforts to crush Isis, and discovers, in short, that many believe Isis is winning.

But it also makes a difference that a *Newsweek* story about Assyrian liturgical chants has been reprinted as the cover story in *Monastic Musicians* spring issue (shouldering aside other pieces on psalm tone VIII

and Gregorian chant); to learn that the great topographer Ian Nairn considered Paris ("a collective masterpiece") to be the opposite of Britain's hulking industrial city Birmingham; to ponder the transformative power of shoes; and to realise that our children may know the Colosseum, the Trevi fountain and the Rialto bridge by the names of their new sponsors, Tod's (the shoe chain), Fendi and Diesel.

We are happy to be judged by just how interesting we are.

# Newsweek

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## Campaigns Board



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# Big shots

Yemen

## Makeshift medic

A medic attends to people injured by a mortar shell blast during clashes between Houthis and fighters of the Popular Resistance Committees in Yemen's southwestern city of Taiz.

Photograph: Corbis















Germany

## Under two flags

Young girls wearing German sashes and holding flags depicting the Islamic crescent await the guests of honour at the opening of the Bait-ul-Wahid mosque of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat denomination in Hanau Germany. The mosque has two minarets and space for 500 people.

**Photograph:** Boris Roessler/DPA

Big  
shots



China

## Uniform nurses

Hundreds of students of the school of nursing take part in an open-air examination at a playground of an vocational college in Baoji, Shaanxi province, China.

Photograph: Corbis



Big  
shots













India

## Hot shower

A young Indian child pours water on himself as he tries to cool off in New Delhi, where temperatures have approached 48 degrees celsius in the past week, causing tarmac to melt. More than 1,100 people have died in the heatwave sweeping the country, say the Indian authorities.

**Photograph:** Money Sharma/Getty

Big  
shots



## Terrorism

# The bullied Finnish teenager who became an Isis social media kingpin – and then got out

Sara Elizabeth Williams

@saraewilliams

A year ago, at the height of Isis's social media rampage, a shy, 19-year-old Finnish convert to Islam, who had never even been to the Middle East, was one of the terror group's most devastating propaganda weapons.

Abdullah was prolific. His Mujahid4Life Twitter account, with close to 11,000 followers, was the second most-followed English pro-Isis account after Shami Witness. He tweeted graphic photos and videos, snippets from religious texts, battlefield updates and violent, hateful propaganda. At the time, Abdullah told *Newsweek* he was "a diplomat for Isis". He was a virtual jihadi, an advocate for violence in the name of Islam. Today, he's just another awkward adolescent tweeting from behind a mess of food wrappers in a darkened flat in a mid-sized European city.

Abdullah has recanted his support for Isis and says he wants to help other acolytes do the same. He's one of few people to renounce his violent extremism, and, to those combating online jihadism, he brings a rare view from inside its echo-chamber. "When I was in that Isis bubble, I was thinking so emotionally," he says. "When you're



Online jihad: Abdullah chose an unknown Isis fighter, pictured above, as his screen avatar. He was inspired by al-Qaida's magazine, below



younger you don't have the intellectual capabilities to process it. It was an obsession, just blind devotion."

It's an alarmingly short path from hip-hop fan to radical jihadist: "The internet is such a huge part of recruiting these days, it's not even funny," says Abdullah. "It's like, 99% online. For the kids who do this, it's easy to conceal it." Abdullah, raised in an atheist home, had become curious about religion as he wrestled with teenage questions of identity and belonging. He found Islam and felt it made sense of the world.

He converted in November 2012, declaring the Shahada, or testimony of faith, alone in his bedroom.

His mother, who asked not to be named to protect her family's privacy, watched as her intelligent, emotionally fragile son become increasingly absorbed in his new faith. "At first, I thought it would be a passing thing, like many other phases before. He was 17 at the time and had no friends and no social life," she recalls.

"Knowing my son, I wasn't worried that he would leave the country to join the fighting. My worry was the connections he was making online and how much he was sharing about his 'real' identity on the internet."

Abdullah spent most of his time online, looking for people who shared his desire to follow what he calls "a more pure understanding of Islam". He connected with Jabhat al-Nusra supporters, who steered him to *Inspire*, the al-Qaida franchise's English-language magazine. "Inspire really affected me. And that, coupled with the oppression of Muslims I saw on the news, had an emotional effect," he says.

By the spring of 2013, Abdullah was tweeting support for Jabhat al-Nusra. By summer, he was doing press-ups and crunches, packing a bag and planning to go and fight in Syria. Agents from Finland's





Abdallaah @mujaahidlife · 18m  
May Allaah humiliate these people for breaking their bay'ah to the Khalifa and may He make their loss complete  
#Syria pic.twitter.com/zGZAVL9M



Abdallaah @mujaahidlife · 32m  
These are the final pics. O Allaah punish the traitors with a great punishment. #IS #Syria #baqiawatafamadad  
pic.twitter.com/zg75aUf1gpr



Abdallaah @mujaahidlife · 37m  
These are the final pics. O Allaah punish the traitors with a great punishment. #IS #Syria #baqiawatafamadad  
pic.twitter.com/zg75aUf1gpr



Abdallaah @mujaahidlife · 49m  
"Fight them, Allah will punish them by ur hands & will disgrace them & give you victory over them" - 9:14 #Syria #IS  
pic.twitter.com/SCW5yE2Vq

**Hate propaganda: Abdullah tweeted graphic photos and videos but was revolted by the killing of British aid worker Alan Henning last October**

security services, Supo, were soon at his door: they had noticed his activity online and asked him not to go. Rumbled, Abdullah continued to support Nusra's jihad from afar.

When Nusra and the upstart Islamic State of Syria and al-Sham (Isis) came head to head in late summer 2014, Abdullah felt he couldn't remain neutral; he had to choose a side. He chose Isis, and waded deeper into an online community built around sharing what he now describes as a "cherry-picked" interpretation of Islam.

As his profile rose, Abdullah knitted deeper into this community. For someone who had been bullied viciously in primary school, the sense of being part of something important resonated. "What drew me in was actually doing something, explaining stuff. You disseminate that propaganda, so it makes you feel part of something bigger. Especially after Isis declared the caliphate," he says.

Charlie Winter, a researcher with the Quilliam Foundation think tank, says this is a common feeling among online propagandists: "It's an easy way to take part in jihad without putting themselves at risk." In Finland, disseminating propaganda the way Abdullah did isn't illegal unless there is an overt recruitment element - something Abdullah says he carefully avoided.

According to Supo, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, a little more than 60 Finns have travelled to Syria to fight, and, already, a third of them have returned. Supo's Tuomas Portaankorva says: "The possible threat from the returnees is our priority at the moment. Web monitoring is only one line of our work. What we see online is mostly connected to those who have travelled, or are about to, or are returning."

Although Supo reached Abdullah before he could go, there's no telling how many of the foreign fighters who continue to stream into Syria were inspired by him, or others like him. The agency won't

comment on individual cases, but Portaankorva admits that the issue of how to handle online supporters is a thorny one. "Without these individuals, there would definitely be, in general, fewer travellers," he says.

Abdullah began to question Isis when the group killed the British aid worker Alan Henning in October 2014. He looked to classic scholarship for justification for the violence but couldn't find any. He tried to start discussions around theological texts, but no one wanted to talk: "It's all see no evil, hear no evil."

By the end of the year, Twitter was shutting down pro-Isis accounts and Abdullah wasn't interested in the daily scramble to create a new account and propagate a worldview to which he no longer subscribed: "When I went back to what Islam teaches, I saw no justification for these things. My message to young people is to go back to Islamic roots, stop living in the bubble. As Muslims we should go back to the religion itself, not what anyone claims." Abdullah's experience points to a need to counter Isis on an ideological level - one that feels authentic to participants and has the theological authority to give them something to hold onto as they reject extremism.

After months out of the social media loop, Abdullah has returned to Twitter as an anti-extremist to convince would-be jihadis to reconsider. Going back hasn't been easy. The vitriol has been immense - and familiar. "To go from someone who is making takfir on people to someone who has takfir made on him..." Abdullah sighs. "I didn't think it was going to be this harsh. There's a weird, dark irony to it."



**Is Isis winning the war?**  
**Page 38**



South Asia

# India's first gay marriage ad turns into a new battle over caste

**Sonia Paul** Mumbai

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The advertisement in the matrimonials section of the Indian tabloid *Mid-Day*, in late May 2015, was almost mundane: "SEEKING 25-40, well-placed, animal-loving, vegetarian GROOM ... (36, 5'11") who works with an NGO, Caste No Bar (Though IYER Preferred)," a mother had written. In South Asia marital ads are commonplace and sometimes dominate whole sections of newspapers.

The surprise was the missing three words: "for my son". Homosexual sex is a criminal offence in India - deemed so by a colonial-era law that ranks gay sex as akin to bestiality - and coming out to families remains a source of fear and shame for a majority of India's gay population.

As a result, Padma Iyer's marriage ad for her son, Harish, a gay rights activist in Mumbai, drew both criticism and praise. What's been dubbed as India's first gay matrimonial ad was understood as a challenge to society's morals; but its intentionally provocative stance on gay marriage has since been overshadowed by another argument - about caste.

Until recently, India had made strides towards equality for LGBTQ citizens. Homosexuality was decriminalised in 2009, when Section 377 of the Indian penal code, which bans sexual acts "against the order of nature", was declared unconstitutional by the High Court of Delhi. However, in late 2013, the Supreme Court of India overturned that decision, recriminalising homosexual sex and, by association, the nation's millions of homosexuals.

Supporters of LGBTQ rights saw a huge step backward for India and the region; Nepal is now the only country in South Asia where homosexuality is legal - although Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and India have voting laws that recognise a third gender. But since the conservative Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in India in 2014, the issue has been given less attention, according to Gautam Bhan, a lawyer and prominent gay rights activist based in Delhi.

"I think the general sense within the BJP is that they've also tried to take the backseat with this a little bit," he says. "Even some of the more vocal Hindu rights organisations have been quiet on this while they take on other agendas."

While many saw the ad as an example of how confident and mobilised India's gay community has become in recent years - thanks in part to the new freedom and solidarity that blossomed after 2009 - others were offended by another phrase used in the advertisement, "Caste No Bar (Though IYER preferred)".

"Iyer" refers to a community

of Tamil Brahmins - Brahmins being the highest group in India's caste hierarchy, and Tamil referring to the culture and people originating from the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Distinguishing between different castes can serve multiple purposes, from reserving spaces in schools or government offices for members of historically disadvantaged or marginalised communities, to using caste as a marker of "culture" that allows people from a common background to share a sense of identity.

Padma Iyer says that the caste line was added in jest to make the ad appear more typical of the caste-obsessed matrimonial ads that pepper Indian newspapers. "If tomorrow Harish tells me he's fallen in love with a Muslim or Christian, I will open my arms to him," she says.

But given the caste system's hierarchical structure, with caste groups falling above or below one another, it's long been associated with discrimination and segregation as well. Critics claim the very mention of caste is an

affront to the inclusive gay rights movement.

"I think a lot of people are quite angry about it," says Mario da Penha, a Mumbai-based PhD candidate at Rutgers University who researches sexual history in India. "The kind of anger that you have directed against that ad comes from this moment where the nation just hasn't tackled caste the way it tries to tackle other things."

Padma Iyer says she simply wants her son to find a long-term companion. Harish, on the other hand, argues the word "preference" should be interpreted loosely. Biases, whether they are spoken or unspoken, always exist, he says.

"Would I get married to someone who is a *chaiwallah*, maybe?" he asked, using the Hindi word for a tea stall worker. "Don't we have economic and linguistic biases? Don't we all have biases when it comes to a certain prototype of a person that we like and don't like?"

While the advertisement's talk of caste has attracted its own controversy, Padma Iyer's public support for her son's sexuality has elicited praise. The decision to reinstate the ban on homosexual sex has not been accepted by activists or by many members of the public.

After Section 377 was reinstated, Justice Leila Seth, mother of the author Vikram Seth, wrote an excoriating op-ed in the *Times of India*. "Our eldest, Vikram, is now a criminal, an unapprehended felon," she wrote. "Now, once again, if Vikram falls in love with another man, he will be committing a crime punishable by imprisonment for life if he expresses his love physically. The Supreme Court judgment



Breakthrough ad: Padma Iyer used traditional means to find a groom





**Criminal again: Protests in Delhi after the Supreme Court recriminalised homosexual sex in 2013. Below, novelist Vikram Seth also spoke out**

means that he would have to be celibate for the rest of his life or else leave the country where he was born, to which he belongs, and which he loves more than any other.”

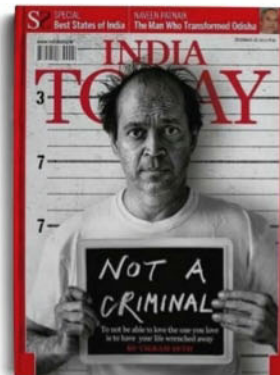
Activists argue an ad like Padma Iyer’s - which was rejected by other mainstream Indian papers before *Mid-Day* picked it up - is necessary for gays, lesbians and their families to be exposed to an alternative to heterosexual marriages, which many are forced into to satisfy social or family pressures.

“I do know gay men out there who think they can keep marriage separate from their sexuality, that they can marry and even be a good husband, but still screw around on the side,” says Sandip Roy, a senior editor at the Indian news website Firstpost and author of the book *Don’t Let Him Know*. “In that sense, I think what’s great about Mrs Iyer’s ad is that

it plants a seed that marrying someone of the opposite sex is not the only way someone can be settled.”

Padma Iyer admits that she encouraged her son to marry a woman in the past, but gave up on the idea after Harish dismissed it as an injustice to the woman he might marry. She said understanding her son’s sexuality and learning to be open-minded about it has been a coming-out process for her as well. “He first took me to a gay parents meet, in Bombay,” she says. “I saw so many other children who are gay and lesbian. And suddenly I started realising my son was not the only one.”

She also realised she wasn’t the only parent. Among the more than 100 emails she’s received in response to the ad - some criticising it, others praising it, and yes, a few answering it- have been emails



from other parents expressing their respect and admiration for what she has done.

One was from a father of another gay man in Delhi. “His letter was very heartfelt,” Padma says. “He wrote how his son was gay and how he had told him really late in life. He said, ‘I don’t think I can put an ad out because I am so old. I will be very grateful if you could find a groom for my son as well’.”

## Two Numbers

**2,160**

Number of VIP  
seats in Qatar World  
Cup stadium

**4,000**

Number of migrant workers  
expected to die before the  
stadium is complete



USA

# Mainstream Republican politicians take up the ideals of an extremist anti-government militia

**Nina Burleigh** New York

✉@ninaburleigh

Republican presidential candidates gathered last month at the Oklahoma City Cox Conference Center, a few blocks from the site of the worst crime of domestically bred terror in the nation's history. Twenty years ago, anti-government militia sympathiser Timothy McVeigh planted a bomb there that killed 168 and injured more than 680 others. McVeigh was executed in 2001, but since then, some of his ideals have been absorbed by mainstream politicians and even been introduced as laws in many US states, including Oklahoma.

Lawmakers in dozens of states have submitted proposals to nullify or block federal laws - a longtime goal of militias, suspicious of central government. These have included exempting individual states from federal gun laws and educational standards, as well as Obamacare. Republican politicians now often echo conspiracy theories once relegated to troglodyte pamphlets, and several states have even passed laws making gold a currency - a step toward returning to the gold standard.

Tarso Ramos, executive director of Political Research Associates, which tracks Right-wing extremism, says formerly fringe ideas became mainstream after McVeigh's assault. "The Oklahoma City bombing had a sobering effect for a while," he says. "Then, with the election of Obama, you get a whole new wave of Patriot [anti-government militia] activity and a new variant of conspiracy-ism, including the idea that Obama is an agent of powerful elites."

The surge in fringe activism was so dramatic after Obama's election that, in 2009, the Department of Homeland Security issued a warning that Right-wing extremism would grow and that "the consequences of their violence [could be] more severe". That report was withdrawn after a conservative outcry.

Militia sympathisers today have the ears of many Republican politicians. This spring, Texas Governor Greg Abbott, right, has vowed to keep watch on the US military as it runs war games called

"Jade Helm 15". Some Texans suspect an armed, federal takeover of the Lone Star state. The junior senator from Texas, Ted Cruz, who is running for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination, says: "I understand the reason for concern and uncertainty, because when the federal government has not demonstrated itself to be trustworthy in this administration, the natural consequence is that many citizens don't trust what it is saying."

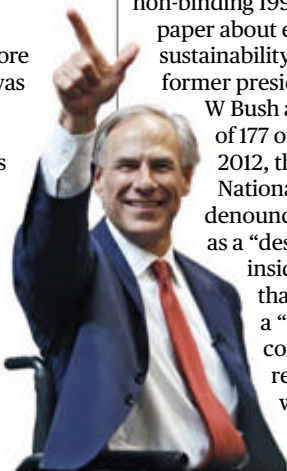
The "nullifiers" fear both Washington and the United Nations. State legislators and local officials have passed dozens of laws barring implementation of Agenda 21, a non-binding 1992 UN white paper about environmental sustainability, signed by former president George H W Bush and the leaders of 177 other nations. In 2012, the Republican National Committee denounced Agenda 21 as a "destructive and insidious scheme" that would impose a "socialist/communist redistribution of wealth". Now Cruz claims

Agenda 21 would "abolish" golf courses and paved roads. Last year, Oklahoma lawmakers passed an Agenda 21 nullification law.

Conservatives are using the 10th Amendment, which reserves powers for the states not mentioned in the rest of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, to challenge federal authority, in other areas. In 2004, a Montana gun enthusiast named Gary Marbut found another use for the 10th Amendment, pushing a bill exempting guns manufactured and retained in Montana from federal regulation. The bill became law in 2009, called the Firearms Freedom Act. Six other states soon followed suit.

A survey by Pro Publica in 2012 found 37 states have since passed laws circumventing federal gun laws and 12 states are considering so-called Second Amendment Preservation Acts, which would nullify federal gun laws altogether. In some cases, the state laws have criminalised the federal agents who try to enforce federal laws.

Last summer, Oklahoma joined Utah and Arizona in giving a glimmer of hope to fans of another of the militia-world's goals - returning



## Perspectives

### Denmark

#### A Danish independent

candidate, John Erik Wagner, 52, who is running for PM, has stunned Copenhagen after unveiling election posters which show him wearing nothing more than a gun holster and cowboy hat. One of his promises is to close the nation's job centres.

### Italy

#### Italy's top court has ruled that

a boss who created a fake Facebook account in order to monitor an employee's online activity at work hasn't broken the law. The employee was chatting on Facebook Messenger instead of working and was subsequently fired.

### Ireland

#### Owners of a Christian bakery,

found guilty of discrimination after refusing to make a cake with a pro-gay marriage slogan on it, said that they "discriminated against no individual but rather acted according to what the Bible teaches", and will challenge the ruling.

### Spain

#### Former IMF chief and

politician Rodrigo Rato has been accused by state prosecutors of giving his children company shares worth €2.5m in order to avoid paying civil liability bonds. Rato is now being investigated as part of a criminal investigation.





**Terror attack: the devastation caused by a fuel and fertiliser truck bomb detonated by McVeigh in 1995**

America to the gold standard. In 2014, Oklahoma made it law that “gold and silver coins issued by the United States government are legal tender in the State of Oklahoma”. Similar proposals are being pushed in at least a dozen states.

There are some intriguing similarities between the current political climate and that of the mid-Nineties, when McVeigh gathered up the fertiliser for his Ryder truck bomb. Back then, as now, a Democratic president (Bill Clinton) was presiding over an improving American economy, his popularity provoking the fear and loathing of a corner of the Right wing political spectrum contemplating – and, occasionally, engaging in – armed resistance.

Then, as now, the number of anti-government armed resistance groups was at a watermark high. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of

anti-government “Patriot” militias peaked at 858 in 1996, just after McVeigh killed 168 people, including children, in the heart of Oklahoma City. The militia tally fell almost immediately – a consequence, analysts say, of shame over the horrific act, followed by new fears of Islamic terrorism. Then came Obama. Since his election in 2008, the number of anti-government extremist groups tracked by the Southern Poverty Law Center has risen to a new record high: 874.

Ramos says he believes the difference is that now fringe rage against the Obama administration is being channelled into a larger Right-wing populist movement: “The Tea Party represents this coalition between those working in the formal system and those focused outside – white nationalists who depict Obama with a Hitler mustache.”

To suggest that today’s tyranny rhetoric bears any link

to McVeigh-style violence provokes outrage among conservatives, and Wichita State University political scientist Neal Allen, who has studied nullification laws past and present, says the new politically active nullifiers differ from their anti-government cousins. “There is a lot of distance between Timothy McVeigh and attempts by state government to block or limit federal power, not least because McVeigh was coming from a clearly racist position,” he says.

Allen says the problem with the GOP’s absorption of extremist rhetoric and goals is how it affects the political process. When politicians court a base that believes the federal government is the enemy, it becomes nearly impossible to negotiate. Judging by the gridlocked committee rooms of the Capitol, that metaphorical truck bomb has already detonated.

## If I ruled the world



### Anne Hidalgo

*Anne Hidalgo is the first female mayor of Paris. A member of the Socialist Party for more than 20 years, she is currently campaigning for an €8m pedestrian highway on the right bank of the Seine.*

#### One law I would pass?

I would abolish the death penalty – so that no individual can be robbed of the humanity to which we all contribute.

#### Who I'd ennoble?

Should a form of nobility exist based on merit alone, I would ennoble Asia Bibi, who is already a Citizen of Honour of the City of Paris, because true nobility is achieved in fighting for freedom.

#### One thing I would ban?

Diesel and all pollution that threatens the environment in which we live. I am already waging this war in Paris.

#### Who I'd send to Siberia?

I would forgo this power, because I believe that exiling a specific person entails exiling part of our own values.

#### Where I'd build my palace?

In Paris to house a parliament of the world’s mayors. Then everyone could promote their local-level solutions in pursuit of a shared future.

#### Compulsory book to read?

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Then while rafting down a river, they can discover the sensation of freedom outside of social conventions, and acquire the will to live life as one chooses.



#WorldRefugeeDay

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escaped  
sniper fire.



# Refugees.

Ordinary people,  
forced to flee.

Get to know Nader  
[www.refugeeday.org](http://www.refugeeday.org)

PHOTO: UNHCR / R. ARNOLD







## Big mouth

**Tetsuo the hippopotamus opens wide to let his teeth be brushed by a keeper at Tennoji Zoo in Osaka ahead of Japan's National Cavity Awareness Day. Hippos have up to 40 teeth and some grow up to half a metre long. They normally let fish and birds clean their teeth for them rather than rely on human aid.**

## Greece

# Wealthy Greeks pay out thousands of euros each month to keep public services afloat

**Lizette Borrelli**

✉@lizcelineb

Greece's police force and coastguard are being kept afloat by some of the country's wealthiest families and individuals, as pressure grows on their government to reach a deal with foreign creditors. If no deal is struck to unlock much needed rescue loans by the beginning of next month, it is likely Greece will run out of money. Meanwhile, rich Greek families are keen to ensure the continued protection of their property - on land and at sea.

"It's a common secret," says Ioannis Michaletos, an analyst from the Institute for Security and Defence Analysis, a non-profit think tank based in Athens. Greece's police patrol cars are in need of replacement, while hospitals and schools have been told they cannot employ any new staff. There is also a fuel shortage for patrol cars in some

areas, according to Michaletos. In 2011, the year after Greece's initial bailout, burglaries increased by almost 50%, while both the police force and the coastguard have faced salary cuts, taking to the streets several times in protest.

Michaletos describes the amounts of money being given, as "a few thousand euros from donors to buy fuel for patrol cars, or new radios, on a monthly basis. These people are not super rich, just well off - professionals and business owners". He believes hundreds of thousands of euros, possibly even millions, are being given by larger donors to buy vessels for the Greek coastguard.

Paul Anastasi, an Athens-based foreign correspondent for *Newsweek* and a private investigator, explains that donations to the Greek coastguard are particularly popular as the wealthiest Greeks are mostly shipowners who need to protect their assets.

"They need the coastguard. The coastguard is very important to them," he says.

Anastasi also believes there are more cynical factors at play, with wealthy Greeks donating to the police force. "There is also an ulterior motive," he says. "If you keep the police happy, they keep you happy as well. If a wealthy Greek is living somewhere nice, having patrol cars around is extremely helpful," although he suggests that patriotism plays a part too.

The same phenomenon is also allegedly occurring in the health sector, with private donations being made to hospitals struggling under budget cuts. According to the *New York Times*, in the first four months of this year, around 140 public hospitals in Greece received €43m from the state - down from €650m during the same period last year - and desperate measures, such as recycling medical instruments, are being implemented.

Prof Lycurgus Liaropoulos, a healthcare economist who has advised the Greek government on savings, says that public expenditure on hospitals has fallen dramatically as a result of the crisis.

According to Liaropoulos, the total percentage of GDP spent on healthcare in Greece this year has been 4.3%, down from 5.7% in 2014. He believes that "a few hundred million" could have been donated in private donations in the past couple of years, and contributed to buying new ambulances, special burns units and CAT scans. He says these donations are "noble" - and necessary as the money can avoid the need for lengthy public tenders, and gets vital equipment into hospitals quickly. But these donations have not changed opinions of the wealthy. "You don't make friends by donating to hospitals but you do save lives," says Liaropoulos.





**Linda Aspey**  
Executive Coach

## Red lines and supervision

"One of my red lines is if the organisation says the client doesn't know their job's at risk. I can't work with someone if I know too much about them that they don't know. I'll probably end up coaching the organisation. Equally, when commissioned to develop a valued employee's leadership skills, and they say, 'actually, I have an external interview and all I need is interview technique help,' I'd say, 'I can't coach you on that nor can I tell your organisation why I'm not going to coach you.' These dilemmas have to be handled carefully. Ongoing supervision helps me."

Linda Aspey is a member of The Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision. She has a formal supervisor, participates in a supervision group, has a peer supervisor and is a supervisor herself.

This continuing professional development is critical for Linda: "It helps make the unconscious more transparent so what you do is intentional and conscious. You can see why you're doing things. There is a learning element, and it's also quite restorative. If you've had a tough session it's great to talk with someone about it. Supervision keeps us safe and keeps us boundaried."



Edited by  
Andy Friedman  
www.parnglobal.com

## Art

# The scanner that sees through the layers of paint others can't breach

**Elijah Wolfson** New York

✉@elijahwolfson

A group of European researchers are developing a graphene-based scanner that they say penetrates deep beneath layers of paint, dirt and other materials to unveil unknown features of two and three-dimensional artworks, with no danger of damage.

It's the latest in a growing toolkit of imaging technologies that art conservators can use in uncovering the secrets hidden in artworks. Infrared devices, for example, can put out wavelengths between 700 and 3,500 nanometres "to penetrate

layer by layer, to sort of peel back images", on a piece of art, says Kristin deGhetaldi, a painting conservator and PhD candidate at the University of Delaware. It is how a team of researchers working with the Austerias Fine Art Museum in Oviedo, Spain, discovered there might be a "hidden" painting beneath Pablo Picasso's 1901 work *The Blue Room*.

However, there are limitations to these technologies. Low atomic number pigments like ultramarine don't show up on X-rays, and infrared imaging is mostly limited to revealing the underdrawings in paintings.

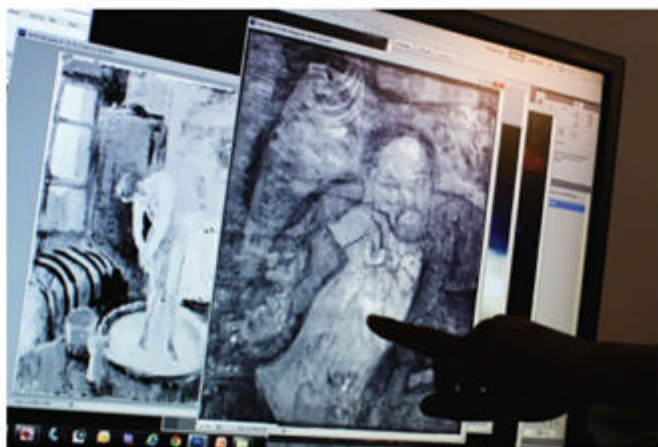
The new graphene-based device uses terahertz radiation, which falls between infrared and microwave radiation on the electromagnetic spectrum, and its inventors say it can reach intermediate layers in paintings that even infrared can't access.

The researchers have been working to test the device in real-world environments, and early results seem positive. "With the prototype we have been able to clearly distinguish between some pigments, which in some cases will avoid having to puncture the painting in order to find out what materials the artist used," says Marta Flórez Igual, a conservator and restorer at Austerias, in a recent press release.

The scanner is still in a trial phase. "It's too early to tell what it offers," says deGhetaldi, and ultimately, widespread adoption will likely depend on cost which is expected to be high. The best infrared systems cost up to \$100,000 (€92,200), and digital X-ray systems are not cheap either.

Even if the scanner becomes standard equipment in conservation labs, it probably won't be able to fully replace the gold standard in fine art preservation science: taking the tiniest of paint samples ("the size of a period at the end of a sentence in 10-point Times New Roman font," as Mass puts it), encasing it in resin, cutting it into a cross-section and doing all sorts of experiments on it. But that doesn't mean terahertz imaging won't serve a purpose.

"With each new noninvasive technique," Mass says, "we're getting closer to the information you can get with a cross-section sample. Terahertz imaging will add something to the nondestructive study of objects of art."



**Revealed:** finding the image of a man underneath Picasso's *Blue Room*





## Playing with fire

**Borussia Dortmund fans light flares during their German Cup Final football match against VfL Wolfsburg in Berlin. But the hordes of supporters were to be disappointed as Dortmund coach Jurgen Klopp's final match in charge ended in a 3-1 defeat by Wolfsburg.**

## The week ahead

### Sunday 7 June

Chancellor Angela Merkel will welcome the heads of the G7 states to Germany for this year's summit. Topics include the global economy and empowering self-employed women.



### Monday 8 June

The focus of this year's UN World Ocean's Day is to stop plastic pollution. A recent study revealed that eight million tons of plastic rubbish ended up in the ocean in 2010.

### Thursday 11 June

The Copa América – a month-long football tournament fought out between the South American nations – kicks off in Chile. Uruguay will be defending their title.

### Friday 12 June

Greece's deadline to pay €345.7m to the International Monetary Fund falls today. The country is scheduled to repay a total of €1.6bn to the IMF between 5 and 19 June.

The European Games, hosted by Azerbaijan, begin and will last until the end of the month. Around 6,000 athletes from 50 countries will participate.

### Saturday 13 June

Lisbon celebrates the Feast of St Anthony – its annual sardine festival. Mass marriages, known as St Anthony's Weddings, take place in his church.



## Migration

# Germany needs drastic migrant influx to fill looming labour deficit

**Conor Gaffey** London

✉@ConorGaffey

Germany will need to dramatically increase its intake of skilled migrants in order to meet the huge labour deficit caused by the country having the world's lowest birth rate and as a result an ageing population.

A study by auditor BDO and the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI) found that over the past five years, Germany's birth rate was just 8.2 children per 1,000 inhabitants, below Japan's 8.4 births. The downward spiral means the country's working-age population – between 20 and 65 – would drop from 61% to 54% by 2030, leaving thousands of vacant posts.

Almost 21% of Germans are aged 65 or older, making it the world's second oldest population, and on average German women do not have their first child until age 30.

Germany is not alone in

facing the economic trauma of an increased elderly population and fewer young professionals. The study found Portugal and Italy to have similarly low birthrates at 9.0 and 9.3 children respectively, while the International Organisation for Migration estimates that the EU's working-age population will plummet by 45 million over the next 50 years.

Germany is the most popular European destination for migrants, with 400,000 permanent arrivals in 2012 – 38% up on 2011. However the country still has a skills crisis in sectors, such as healthcare and the automotive industry.

"We see a danger that the capacity of Germany to innovate, to develop new products and to compete on the world market might decline over the next 10 or 20 years," says the study's co-author Dr Andre Wolf. He adds that the country's pension system could collapse as the number of young

professionals paying into it continues to plummet.

A 2011 study by the Nuremberg-based Institute for Employment Research estimates more than 400,000 skilled immigrants per year would be required as Germany's labour force shrinks by seven million in the next 10 years.

Angela Merkel's government has adopted several measures to recruit competent migrants and promote population growth, including adopting the Blue Card scheme in 2012, which simplifies immigration procedures for highly qualified non-EU nationals.

The government also offers a generous child benefits scheme, with parents receiving €184 per month for the first child. But it appears inevitable that Berlin will have to look outwards.

"If Germany wants to stay a leading economy it will need to rely on increased immigration," says Pawel Swidlicki, policy analyst at Open Europe.





**Adam LeBor  
in Budapest**

✉ @adamlebor

## Politics

# Azerbaijan's dark reality belies the glamour of the European Games

The European Games open in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, on 12 June. Some 6,000 athletes from almost 50 countries are set to compete. But Khadija Ismayilova, below, the country's best known investigative journalist, is unlikely to attend. Ismayilova, a correspondent for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) has just celebrated her 39th birthday in prison.

For years Ismayilova has been subjected to harassment, smear campaigns and intimidation after exposing the business activities of the country's ruling elite. At one stage intimate footage of Ismayilova was released on the internet in an attempt to silence her. Unbowed, she continued working until 5 December 2014, when she was arrested on the Kafkaesque charge of inciting an ex-colleague to attempt suicide.

Three weeks later her Baku office was raided. Investigators and armed police ransacked the bureau, confiscated documents and detained other staff members for several hours before releasing them. Ismayilova's accuser withdrew his claim but a new set of charges soon followed: embezzlement, abuse of power, tax evasion and running an illegal business. Ismayilova faces a prison sentence of 12 years if found guilty.

The charges are absurd. The regime intends to keep her in prison for a long time, Kenan Aliyev, former director of Azerbaijani service, tells *Newsweek*. But Khadija is strong and she is a fighter. There is no government or regime that can break her spirit.

On 5 May PEN USA honoured Ismayilova with the Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award. Her case has garnered international attention - especially as RFE/RL is funded by the US Congress - but she is one of numerous Azerbaijani reporters, bloggers and human rights activists to face criminal charges.

Reporters Without Borders ranks Azerbaijan 162 out of 180 countries for press freedom. The Committee to Protect Journalists ranks Azerbaijan as the fifth most censored country in the world, above Iran, China and Cuba.

Azerbaijani officials are keen to use the European Games to showcase the capital, Baku, and the country at large, just as they did in 2012 when Azerbaijan hosted the Eurovision Song Contest. The Games are supported by the European Olympic Committee.

Sponsors include Tissot watches, Coca-Cola and McDonald's. There is a slick English-language website and Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts.

For now, the sporting and wider world's attention is focused on the chaos at FIFA, football's world governing body. But the growing repression in Baku also demands action, say activists. Beyond the glitzy, glamorous image, things have never been worse in Azerbaijan, says Rebecca Vincent, coordinator of the Sport for Rights campaign. Khadija is a prisoner of the games, and the regime did not want her to be out. Nearly everybody who is publicly critical has fled, been locked up or pressurised to be silent.

President Ilham Aliyev's increasing repression is sounding alarms across Europe and in the USA. On 13 April 45 former US officials, experts, organisations and activists wrote to John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, noting that Azerbaijan has twice as many political prisoners as Russia and Belarus combined. The signatories called for visa bans and asset freezes on government officials involved in gross human rights abuses and the ceasing of trade promotion assistance to state-owned entities. The government in Azerbaijan cannot be both a respected member of the international community and a repressive, kleptocratic autocracy. It must choose.

Azerbaijan's defenders point out that the country is a rare island of stability in an ever-more turbulent region and an ally of the West.

Azerbaijan is a member of the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the European Union's Eastern Partnership. The moderate Shia-majority, oil-rich state, has strong relations with Israel. A steady ally in the fight against Islamic terrorism, it is also a useful listening post into Iran.

Thus far, President Aliyev has been able to continue his deft balancing act. Still, there are signs that the regime is becoming rattled. President Aliyev did not attend the EU summit in Riga on 21 May, claiming he was too busy with preparations for the games. As for Khadija Ismayilova, she remains as defiant as ever. Yes, there is a price to pay, she wrote from prison, but it is worth it. We need to build a new reality where truth will be a norm of life and telling the truth will not require courage.



“

Nearly everybody publicly critical of the growing repression in Baku has fled, been locked up or pressurised to be silent



# Business

## Technology

### No more stupid decisions – now you can rely on data instead of being misled by your instincts

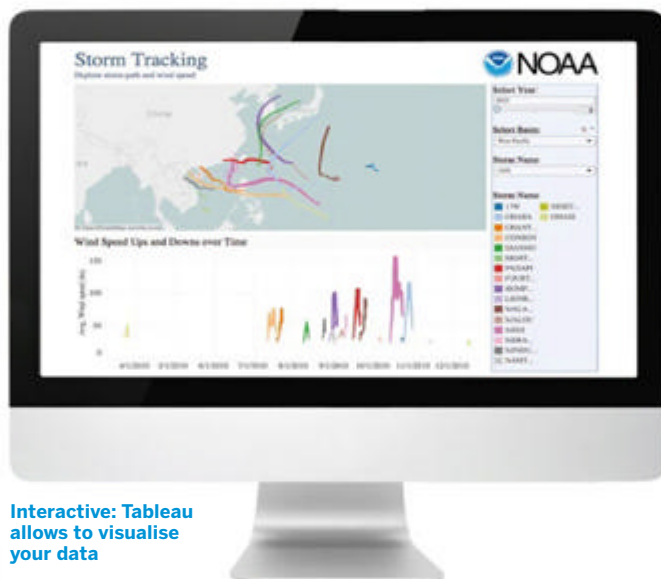
Kevin Maney New York

@kmaney

It's a sad truth that our brains are terrible at understanding data. Even worse, they often use random data to deceive us and make us do stupid things – a phenomenon known as cognitive bias. But the Seattle company, Tableau Software, believes it can help people use data to be less stupid. Hard to imagine a technology that could more profoundly affect our daily existence.

In this era of Big Data, we have data about everything. The data, though, is typically packed into hard-to-decode Excel spreadsheets or locked in databases that only experts can read. Tableau wants to change that by giving ordinary people data visualisation software that's as easy to use as Facebook, so we can make more decisions based on data instead of on our instincts, which are mostly terrible.

In a way, this is a new twist on an age-old story of human knowledge. Little by little, data has encroached on our cognitive biases. Depending on who is counting, we have four or five dozen kinds of cognitive biases, including Confirmation Bias (we favour information that confirms our preconceptions) and the Neglect-of-Probability Bias (we hear of a single dramatic event, like a child abduction, believe it's much more



Interactive: Tableau allows to visualise your data

common than it really is). In the absence of data, we believe our cognitive biases.

Centuries ago, people looked at the sky and concluded that the Earth was the centre of the universe. Data about the movement of planets, most famously collected by Galileo, eventually eroded that false belief – although cognitive bias was so powerful that, instead of celebrating Galileo for his

“

We hear of a single dramatic event and believe it's more common than it really is

insight, officials put him under house arrest. Over time, we have collected masses of data and invented tools like computers to make sense of it. Now, thanks to mobile phones and the internet, data is exploding.

Yet it's amazing how relatively little of this data infiltrates our cognitive biases. Tableau's software could change that by sucking data out of complicated spreadsheets and presenting it as interactive pictures: maps and graphs that can reveal trends and patterns with a mouse click or two.

Tableau grew out of PhD research into data visualisation at Stanford University. Nothing quite like it existed before, and

a dozen years after Tableau was founded, it's still a work in progress. Tableau's revenues have been doubling about every 18 months, and the company is now worth more than \$8bn. And yet, as CEO Christian Chabot tells me: “We probably have reached less than 1% of the people who can benefit from our products. We've barely made a dent so far.”

Chabot imagines a world where we check our cognitive biases with data all the time, much the way you look at the GPS map on your smartphone instead of guessing about where you are. Think of all the decisions you now make in a data vacuum. If you have that next whisky, what's the trade-off between how much fun you'll have tonight versus how much you'll suffer in the morning? If you take this job, will you be happy in a year?

One McKinsey study showed that when businesses worked at reducing the effect of cognitive bias in decision making, they achieved returns of up to seven percentage points higher. In sports, the potential impact seems obvious. *Moneyball* showed how professional baseball was steeped in intuition that turned out to be wrong.

We'll eventually have data that can help with any kind of decision, and it should make us smarter, more logical, more grounded in reality – as a species, less stupid.



# Newsweek

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## Political hot air

Balloons by campaign group ONE depicting G7 national leaders float in Dresden, Germany ahead of the G7 Finance Ministers meeting.

## Growth

# China gains ground in global brand value list

Conor Gaffey London

✉@ConorGaffey

Stagnant European brands are being outpaced by flourishing Chinese and US tech companies, a new survey shows. Researchers at Millward Brown who conduct an annual "Brandz" global brand value study for communications group WPP have said that the value of Chinese brands had exploded by 1004% in the past 10 years, with US companies growing by 137%. In contrast, European brands showed a sluggish rate of 31% growth in the past decade, with their total value shrinking by almost 10% in the last year.

The tech sector contributes more than \$1tn to the overall value of the top 100 companies ranked by market research company Millward Brown, which equates to nearly a third of the brands' combined value.

US technology giant Apple was the world's most valuable brand, overtaking Google with a total value of \$247bn. All of the top 10 brands were American and the top four were all technology companies, with Microsoft and IBM making up the prolific quartet.

Along with technology and media provider Tencent, the Chinese brand boom has been led by e-commerce company Alibaba. Despite a recent slowdown, Jack Ma's company recorded the highest ever initial public offering (IPO) at \$25bn last year and accounts for about 80% of all online sales in China.

Alibaba entered one place above US online marketplace Amazon in the rankings to become the world's most valuable retail brand at \$66.4bn.

There are now 14 Chinese brands in the top 100 compared with just one 10 years ago. Though there are still 24 European brands in the ranking, this is down from 35 in 2006. The UK contributes just five companies to the ranking.

The top-valued Chinese firm, Tencent, was valued at \$76.6bn, almost double the value of British telecoms firm Vodafone, which at \$38.5bn was the most valuable European brand.

The highest-ranked European brand from outside the UK was German software firm SAP, ranked 24th at \$38.2bn. French luxury fashion retailer Louis Vuitton posted healthy growth of 6% last year.

## The smart money

# Expect a bumper crop of intellectual property farms



Rory Ross

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IP farms are not new. They are companies that nurture early-stage technology projects in order to commercialise the intellectual property (IP) therein. Some of these techno-Emmerdales have enjoyed glittering stock market careers.

At the battery end, IP Group and Allied Minds are the giants, capitalised at €1.8bn each; at the ornamental level, Frontier IP comes in at just €7m. But this fledgling sector is beginning to move fast. Oxford Sciences Innovation has just raised €293m and grabbed exclusive access to all Oxford University's IP for 15 years.

Curiously, Britain is at the centre of the IP "agri-boom". You'd have thought the Americans with their Silicon Valley savvy and their Nasdaq knowhow would have taken the lead. But no, they don't get it. This has been highlighted by the fact that Allied Minds is based in Boston but quoted in London.

Now, another Bostonian IP farm is about to float in London: PureTech Health. PureTech is a science-driven healthcare company that scours hundreds of technologies each year in order to address unmet healthcare needs.

"We develop programmes rooted in academic research, and then place them in independent companies and build strategies around them," says Daphne Zohar, CEO. "We didn't even think about listing on Nasdaq. The UK is where this

sector exists. It has analysts, peers and sophisticated investors."

Some of PureTech's investee companies probe the weird and whacky fringes of healthcare. The Sync Project explores the health potential of music.

"Music affects the brain like a dopamine pathway," says Zohar. "Sync looks for signatures of what types of music might create certain effects."

"Sometimes, what is impossible in one discipline is solvable in another," continues Zohar. "We are focused on healthcare approaches that fall between and beyond existing disciplines. Healthcare is converging with technology."

## The business model of your typical IP farm sounds cruel

Google and Apple are entering this space."

The business model of your typical IP farm sounds cruel but it works well. As Charles Weston of Numis Securities explains, it aims to "stress-test to failure an investee company to see if it is patentable, scaleable, marketable and reproducible". Once on the stock market, it can be presented to shrewd investors like Invesco, Neil Woodford or Lansdowne.

This is PureTech's model, based squarely on that of IP Group. "Absolutely," says Zohar, "In fact, Dave Norwood [founder of IP Group] is in the next door room right now."

This sector is so fast-growing that it still hasn't got a name. The London Stock Exchange classifies it under "financials". If Britain wants to maintain its head start on the US, perhaps it better think of one fast.

# 'I don't live in the past. People stereotype me as a fogey. I am not. I go to hip hop concerts. I listen to Kendrick Lamar'

## David Brooks, New York Times columnist



**By Robert Chalmers**

✉@Escartefigue777

Call me stubborn, I tell David Brooks, but I've never got along with self-help books. I may have been buying the wrong ones. I have a copy of Arianna Huffington's work, *The Fourth Instinct*, in which she notes that: "There is a great deal that we share with the faithful St Bernard." (Things like perseverance, courage, and a peculiar compulsion to turn around three times before lying down.) I also own *More Joy: An Advanced Guide to Solo Sex* by the American Harold Litten. One paragraph, which I have abridged here, reads: "Penis ... shoelace ... attach 5lb weight ... violent swinging motion ... four times its normal size... black and blue ... emergency room." To be fair to Brooks, the scale and ambition of his new book, *The Road to Character*, offers the reader a very different, if equally daunting, kind of challenge.

"I wrote this book," as he puts it, "to save my soul."

"How's that going?"

"I am not a great person," he

says, "but I'm a better person for having written it. I have a clear sense of right and wrong."

Brooks, 53, is a columnist for the *New York Times* employed, he says, as "a narcissistic blow-hard". He's an amiable if instinctively reserved figure - how could you dislike a man who dispenses advice such as "Wisdom starts with epistemological modesty" and then gets trapped in the lift doors on our way to a London rooftop bar?

Brooks' thesis is that we have become obsessed with what he calls "resumé virtues" - things like market skills and self-promotion - and neglected "eulogy virtues" such as kindness, abstinence and humility. We could benefit from studying the old-world values of figures including Eisenhower and George Eliot, just two of the many subjects of biographical sketches which constitute the main part of the book.

*The Road to Character* concludes with Brooks' 15-point "Humility Code", I read Point Two out loud, replacing the "we" in the original text with the first person pronoun.

"[I] have an innate tendency towards overconfidence," it begins. "[I] underestimate my own failures."

“

**I used to be someone people didn't confide in. Now they talk to me**

"Now that," I tell Brooks, "really isn't me at all. Dwelling on my own failures? I do little else. Ask anyone."

"But 90% of people are not like you. They believe that they have above-average leadership skills."

"Are you saying I'm weird?"

"You are clearly ... unusual. And consequently," Brooks adds, with just a hint of mischief, "should be celebrated."

The notion of transgression, he believes, needs reclaiming, as "Sin is a necessary part of out mental furniture."

"I know what you mean about sin and furniture. I keep mine, to quote Vivian Stanshall, 'in the wardrobe of my soul; in the section labelled Shirts'."

"Personally," Brooks replies, "I keep my sin with my pants."

His book advises us to "do what others don't want to do; go where others don't want to go" next to which, in my copy, I tell him, appears the hand-written note: "Burnley." This leads us to debate another passage on the sins of disrespect and mockery. Disrespect, the text mentions, is traditionally absolved by three steps: "apology, cleansing and restitution".

"I don't recall that," he says, "I've made a living out of mockery."

"Are you sure," I reply, "you should be preaching the wisdom of renouncing worldly ambition while hammering around the world plugging your work like a free market whore ... sorry, that was possibly not the best choice of words there."

"The paradox you mention is

not lost on me. But I do want people to read my book."

"One critic attacked your 'blinkerered, glib moral instruction' and identified a 'passive-aggressive nostalgia for what somebody told Brooks 'outdoors' might have been like long ago'."

"I believe that, over the centuries, smart people had incredibly valuable perceptions. But I don't live in the past. People stereotype me as a fogey. I am not. I go to hip hop concerts."

"Pardon?"

"I listen to Kendrick Lamar. I was at a Nas concert not long ago."

"Has writing this book really changed you?"

"Yes. I'm more vulnerable. I used to be somebody people didn't confide in."

"Why not?"

"I didn't project an ability to listen."

"You should have taken your headphones off."

"I had metaphorical moral headphones on. People didn't associate me with an intimate life. Now, when people have a trauma, they talk to me."

As we say goodbye I sense that Brooks feels the tone of our conversation has been marginally less elevated than it could have been. At least now, if I was occasionally guilty of committing the sin of disrespect, I'm aware of the remedial steps: remorse, cleansing, and restitution. So if I did transgress, David, I'd like you to know that I apologise, I'm running a bath, and the money's in the post.

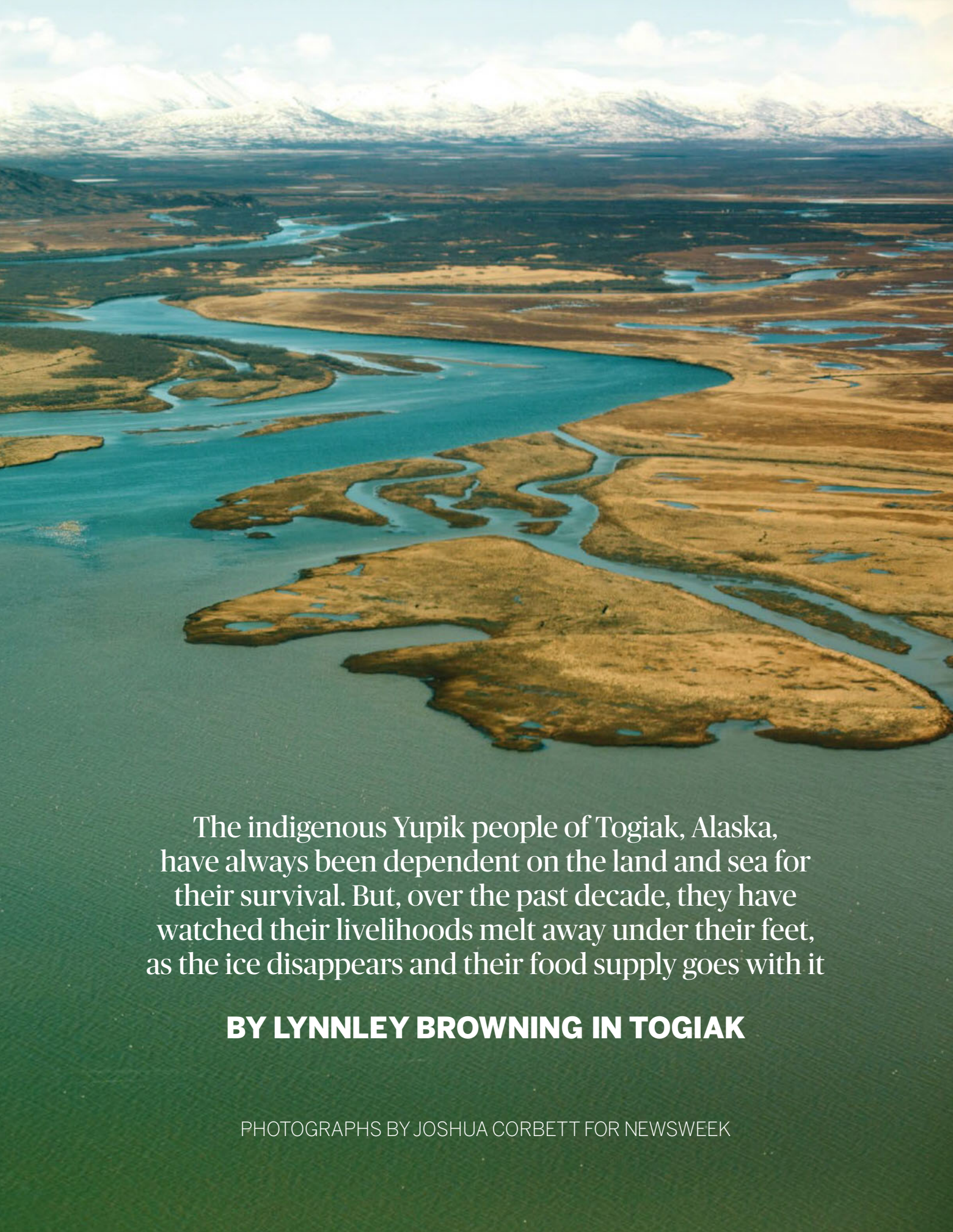






# BAKED ALASKA





The indigenous Yupik people of Togiak, Alaska, have always been dependent on the land and sea for their survival. But, over the past decade, they have watched their livelihoods melt away under their feet, as the ice disappears and their food supply goes with it

**BY LYNNLEY BROWNING IN TOGIAK**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSHUA CORBETT FOR NEWSWEEK



rank Logusak, a tribal elder in Togiak, a ramshackle settlement of 842 people on Alaska's remote Bristol Bay, is a hunter and a fisherman, a Yupik native who knew the village's last shaman and can still build a sod house like the one his grandparents grew up in. Logusak is no scientist, but in his 64 years here, he has watched and felt startling changes in the world around him: shorter and warmer winters, less snow and ice, fewer bears and moose to hunt

and a scarcity of berries to gather in the summer.

For the past two winters, the village of Togiak has had almost no snow - a highly unusual phenomenon. In early April, the surrounding hills are barely dusted with a few patches of white. It is the same in the other 30 villages around Bristol Bay, on the easternmost frontier of the Bering Sea. The area is populated mostly by native Yupik, descendants of fur-clad Siberians who crossed the Bering Land Bridge before the end of the last Ice Age 12,000 years ago.

I fly to Togiak from Dillingham on an ageing Cessna Caravan through the 5,000ft peaks of the Ahklun Mountains, whose glaciers, researchers say, are likely to disappear by the end of the century. From the air, I see wetlands and tundra largely bare of snow and Bristol Bay without the ice cover it should have at this time of year. On a walk through town, I see smokehouses, steam bathhouses, hides drying on sheds and piles of scrap metal. An all-terrain vehicle pulls children on a pink sled through the mud.

"It's a problem, the global warming," Logusak

says, sitting at a lunch table at the village's public school, where older residents join students for government-subsidised free meals. "Ice used to stay in the bay until May," he says. "It's way different now."

Logusak and the two dozen villagers with whom I later spoke do not use the scientific jargon of climate change but everyone describes what is obvious to them: the planet is getting warmer, making everything more difficult in one of North America's last cultures that survive off the land and the sea. "Togiak is a dust bowl. I can see it from across the bay," reads a mid-April Facebook post by Tim Bob Wonhola Jr, a native resident of Twin Hills, a neighbouring village that, like Togiak, is accessible only by plane or boat.

From Alaska to Africa's Kalahari Desert to the Amazon, indigenous communities have been among the hardest hit by climate change, because their way of life is so dependent on nature. "Indigenous peoples are the canary in the coal mine," says Nancy Maynard, a retired Nasa scientist who was lead author of the polar regions section of the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report.

The Yupik who inhabit Togiak are the largest of three indigenous groups in Alaska and eastern Canada called Eskimo (the ethnographic and linguistic term is not considered offensive by native residents). Logusak was appointed to the Togiak Traditional Council, the town's governing body, at the unusually young age of 19; he is now vice president. He played a key role in pushing Alaskan state and federal authorities to reopen the nearby Walrus Islands to subsistence hunting in 1995, more than three decades after Alaska banned the tradition. The US Game and Wildlife Commission allots the entire village of Togiak a "community harvest" of two walruses, with the meat, blubber and skin shared and bartered among households, sometimes with neighbouring villages.

The guttural Yupik language spoken by many in Togiak, and exclusively by some of the oldest tribal elders, has no word for "subsistence".

**Togiak and its Yupik children: Peyton Active (right) and, far right, Lloyd Kritz (helmet), Alyssa Coopchiak, Dreydan Coopchiak (behind Lloyd), Kiersley Kritz (hidden), Brooke and Brea Wasillie**











“Ten years ago, the elders said, “No, no, no, it’s not happening”. But now they see the lack of snow, the tree growth, the lesions on the caribou. Climate change is happening in our face’

Hunting, fishing and foraging are not quaint traditions; they are the anchors of Yupik life and culture of *yuuyaraq*, which roughly means “the way of being a human” and of *yungnaqsaraq*, meaning “our way of being”.

Some three-quarters of those over 16 in the village are not formally employed, and average per capita income is just \$11,739, so subsistence skills are essential to survival. While two small general stores sell basics from cereal to jelly, the cost of flying them in makes prices astronomical (a 1.5-litre bottle of Wesson cooking oil retails for \$25; a 25lb bag of flour costs more than \$53). About one in every four of the village’s roughly 200 households is below the poverty line. Anything more than a cut finger or a sore throat requires medical evacuation by plane to Dillingham, 110km away.

#### The run of the sockeye salmon

As it does across all of wild Alaska, life in Togiak, revolves around the constant quest for wild food that changes with the seasons. Winter is the time for ice fishing and hunting.

The sockeye salmon run, the largest in the world, usually starts in late June, kicking off a frenzied four to five weeks when around half of Togiak households find work fishing commercially or jostle in smaller boats with big trawlers far from Washington. Summer is the time to pick salmonberries for mixing with Crisco and sugar to make *akutaq*, a Yupik diet staple known as “Eskimo ice cream”. In the autumn, people gather “mouse foods”: horsetail, a tuber eaten raw with seal oil; sour dock, an edible grass used for green *akutaq*; and long

**Dry run: Frank Logusak with the snowmobiles he and fellow villagers were unable to use last season to get to their moose-hunting grounds, which meant they shot just a sixth of their usual tally**

grasses for weaving baskets. This cycle depends on subfreezing temperatures from roughly October through mid-April, thick snow on frozen ground and frozen sheet ice in the rivers and bay – all notably absent during my visit.

Togiak hunters travel by snowmobile, with Ruger .222-calibre rifles, survival gear, a VHF radio, nets and fishing rods. Soft, snowless tundra is like quicksand; snowmobiles cannot travel 10ft on it before they start to sink.

The latest moose-hunting season was a bust, says Logusak. Normally, he and others travel up to 129km on snowmobiles, called snow-gos, into the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, an expanse more than twice the size of Puerto Rico. With no snow, they had to stay closer to home. This year and last, they shot just 13 or 14 moose each winter season, barely a sixth of the harvest in prior years. Tracking brown bears was nearly impossible – you need snowy paw prints, says Logusak. “I tried, but I never did get no trail.”

From the two herds of roughly 150,000 caribou in the refuge, Togiak hunters bagged only 16 caribou in the autumn of 2014 and one in the winter 2015 season, a fraction of the 268 designated for culling to keep the herd healthy.

Another local favorite is the ptarmigan, a rotund bird that is roasted or made into stew, but this winter they stayed away on the inaccessible (and colder) slopes of Kilbuck Mountain. “Ptarmigans haven’t come down for the last two years,” says Logusak, blaming the lack of snow



on “too many jet planes, airplanes, ships, cars polluting the sky”.

Fishing through thin ice in the bay and river, in temperatures that topped the upper forties Fahrenheit in January, was at best dangerous, at worst pretty much impossible. For the past couple of years, it seems, at least one person in Togiak has fallen through thin ice in the middle of Bristol Bay and never re-emerged. The bay, which accounts for 40% of all salmon sold in the United States, is the source of around half of Togiak's annual diet. This year, it has been largely free of ice since mid-January, curtailing the normal season for ice fishing for herring and smelt by around four months.

An unusually warm winter brings changes in summer and autumn too. In recent years, the sockeye salmon runs, a splendid profusion of scarlet-red fish with newly bottle-green heads muscling up the Togiak River and eight other rivers feeding into the bay, have come unexpectedly early and petered out quickly. Some studies have examined whether warmer water is to blame. This year, the run, which is expected to start mid-June, is forecast at 54 million, the biggest in two decades.

More fish might seem to indicate a thriving Bristol Bay. But that's not necessarily the case, according to Douglas Causey, a biological sciences professor and director of the Applied Environmental Research Center at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. The run this year may include an unusually large number of young fish not ready to spawn now and in danger of not spawning in future years, given that warmer waters over time stress salmon, ultimately lowering reproductive and survival rates.

So why so many salmon this year? An unusually cold winter in 2011-2012 (part of a pattern of extreme weather shifts) may have created a temporary population boom. That does not change the overarching trend, which has the population of chinook, or king, salmon declining for at least 15 years.

Later in the year, from August to October, picking berries used to be an annual family activity. “It used to look like someone had taken buckets and spilled blackberries” over the tundra, says Margie Frost, a Togiak resident who grew up in Gasiliuk, a village 208km north-east that saw only one-tenth of the normal snowfall this past winter. There were hardly any berries during the past two years, and likely won't be this fall, since the plants that produce berries need snow cover to survive the winter.

“There's so much not normal stuff going on,” says Clara Ann Martin, 54, who is also on the Togiak Traditional Council. Ten years ago, Martin says, “elders said, ‘No, no, no, it's not happening’. But now they see the lack of snow, the tree growth, the lesions on caribou ... Climate change is happening in our face.”

Boston and suburban Connecticut got more snow this winter, over a couple of days, than did Bristol Bay over the entire winter. Last summer, fish struggled to swim upstream and spawn or died in overcrowded creeks that were unusually

## The most at-risk indigenous communities

### Living on the edge

It used to be all about polar bears and trees, but these days climate scientists are paying more attention to people.

For years, climate change studies tended to rely on numbers-heavy charts and complex models to report on phenomena such as shrinking polar and Antarctic ice caps; melting glaciers and permafrost; caribou, reindeer and seal populations declining; and rising sea levels from Nigeria to the Maldives to the South Pacific.

But in recent years, ethnographers, sociologists and think tanks have begun looking more closely at the social and cultural impacts of climate change on indigenous communities. Studies have been published on subjects including the Wauja people in Brazil, who are hit by the shrinking Amazon rain forest; Sami reindeer-herding communities across a warmer northern Finland, Sweden and Norway; Bantu- and Khoisan-speaking tribes in the bone-white Kalahari Basin in sub-Saharan Africa; subsistence communities in Bangladesh and Malaysia whose coastal settlements are at risk of flooding from typhoons, monsoons and higher sea levels. Such studies reflect a growing realisation in academic and policy circles that cultures and societies tied to nature have multigenerational knowledge that gives them special insight into changes in nature.

“In the last decade, it suddenly struck everybody that the impact on people is really important and not just an afterthought,” says Douglas Causey, a biological sciences professor and director of the Applied Environmental Research Center at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. “There is an increasing realisation that climate change is more than a scientific artifact.”

Last year, Earth had its hottest year since weather record-keeping began 135 years ago. The 10 hottest years on record have all occurred since 1998, with nine of the total in the 21st century, according to Nasa and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Recent studies show changes happening more quickly than predicted. The journal *Science* reported in March that the Southern Antarctic ice sheet suddenly began losing its mass in 2009 at a steady, fast rate.

There is also growing interest in the geopolitical effects of climate change. The



Brookings Institute estimates that for every percentage point rise in average temperature and drop in average rainfall, violent conflict between neighbouring states rises 4%, while violent conflict between groups within states climbs 14%. Scholars foresee new shipping routes opening up as the Arctic ice cap shrinks and potentially leading to military conflicts, particularly with Russia, which planted a flag on the seabed below the North Pole in 2007 and has some 4,300 miles of Arctic coastline.

In violence-plagued northern Mali, a desiccated landscape of dust and mud huts where the average rainfall is a third less than it was nearly two decades ago, scholars recently blamed a climate change-induced drought for fuelling conflict between Tuareg separatist rebels, who need water and grass for their cattle herds, and government-backed forces.

Last March, the National Academy of Sciences published a peer-reviewed study stating that “there is evidence that the 2007-2010 drought contributed to the conflict in Syria. It was the worst drought in the instrumental record, causing widespread crop failure and a mass migration of farming families to urban centres.” Some studies suggest climate change will produce permanent refugees.

Last October, a Pentagon report said that “climate change poses immediate risks to national security”. Chuck Hagel, then Defense Secretary, called climate change “a threat multiplier” that could exacerbate the spread of infectious diseases and armed insurgencies. In May, US President Barack Obama picked up that thread, telling graduating cadets at the United States Coast Guard Academy that climate change “constitutes a serious threat to global security, an immediate risk to our national security, and, make no mistake, it will impact how our military defends our country”.



shallow because of the low water level in Togiak Lake, caused by the warm winter before. “It’s affected everybody’s lifestyle,” says Martin. “There’s less hunting and there’s less experience. It affects the kids culturally.”

#### Goodbye, winter

Last year was the warmest on record for the entire planet, with the difference in Bristol Bay, some nine degrees Fahrenheit above normal, particularly extreme. The annual Iditarod sled dog race in March had to be moved from a largely-snowless Anchorage to Fairbanks, farther north. In Alaska’s Far North, at least a dozen villages, including Kivalina, Shaktoolik and Shishmaref, plan to relocate because warmer, higher seas have exacerbated coastal erosion, and seal- and whale-hunting have been curtailed by thinning sea ice.

The Western Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperative is a research organisation created

and staffed by federal agencies and by University of Alaska scientists. Its projections for 2010 to 2019 show April and October temperatures in Dillingham, the heart of Bristol Bay, hovering within one degree of 32 degrees Fahrenheit, a rise of several degrees that threatens to cut a seven-month winter to five. Winter will get even shorter in the long term, the study says. Over the period from 2090 to 2099, Bristol Bay will lose another two months of winter, with March and November no longer having freezing temperatures. Over the next four or five generations, winter in Togiak may be reduced to just three months.

In recent years, researchers have enlisted a citizens’ brigade of Alaska natives in three dozen villages across Bristol Bay to help gather data on changes in their surroundings. People have been posting pictures online of unusual (or unusually early) bugs, fish or plants through so-called local environmental observer networks. (For example the growth of pussy willow, used as a substitute

Over the next four or five generations, winter in Togiak will be reduced to just three months





**A future on the scrapheap? Half of Togiak's population are under the age of 18 and most want to stay and subsistence hunt and fish and do commercial fishing, but warmer winters are threatening stocks**

for aspirin, spotted in January in Togiak, at least three months early, or bees in February in an Aleutian Islands village.)

Sam Gosuk, the school principal, recalled his astonishment at seeing green grass shoots coming out of a river bank in January, four months early. He duly reported the sighting. Sitting in the school cafeteria with the younger generation around him, Logusak sees himself as a teacher. "Before we get worse," he says, "I hope I pass on the knowledge. I hope somebody takes over the issues I've been working on to protect our subsistence way of life for so many years."

With half of Togiak's population under the age of 18, the subsistence way of life is being passed on in school, as well as by the tribal elders. At a class led by Fanny Parker, a teacher of Yupik studies, students learned Yupik vocabulary and grammar and crocheted bullet holders and headbands; one student, Jordan Wassillie, 17, showed off handmade moccasins with deerskin

soles, beaver trim and a hand-beaded Air Jordan logo. Only a handful of Togiak students go to college; most drop out by 10th grade. "Most kids want to stay and subsistence hunt and fish, and do commercial fishing," says Shayla Schwoch, a high school English teacher.

Back in the town of Dillingham, the starting point for flights to Togiak, I thumb a ride from the airport with Tara Kregar, a high school maths and science teacher in Dillingham who taught in Togiak last year. I ask if her students, in both places, are aware of climate change. She nods solemnly, then says, "I have students who ask if the world is coming to an end". ■



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# Is. Isis winning?

American strategy was supposed to 'degrade and destroy' jihadist forces in Iraq. Instead, Isis has taken a Sunni stronghold only 70 miles from Baghdad, and locals and military experts are deeming the US campaign too little, too late

**BY BILL POWELL**







# It

has been nine months since President Barack Obama set forth a policy - "degrade and destroy" - for dealing with Isis, the radical group that emerged as the successor to al-Qaida in Iraq. In that time, despite daily airstrikes, an increased tempo of training Iraqi troops and a wobbly coalition of 60 nations trying to combat Isis, the group has made steady gains in both Iraq and Syria. It not only still controls the city of Mosul, on 17 May, it routed Iraqi troops in the Sunni stronghold of Ramadi, about 70 miles from Baghdad. In Syria it took the strategic city of Palmyra. It has extended its reach into Libya and conducted its first terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia, blowing up a Shiite mosque in the eastern city of Qatif. Far from being degraded, the group Obama once infamously derided as "the jayvee" (short for 'junior varsity', a second-league college sports team) appears in the eyes of many, to be on the march. If the question is, 'Is Isis winning?' the answer, for now, appears undeniable: yes it is.

The Obama administration and the Pentagon have counselled patience. Losing Ramadi was a "setback", the White House said, and not one worth setting our "hair on fire", according to spokesman Josh Earnest. Washington says it will ramp up the pace of training Iraqi troops - training, critics note, that's been going on since the US invasion of 2003.

But interviews with military and political officials and analysts in Iraq - both Iraqi and foreign - paint a darker picture. The grim fact confronting the administration and its international partners is that the degrade and destroy campaign, as currently constituted, is failing. And there are "really no good options going forward," as it struggles with how to counter Isis, says Sajad Jiyad, Iraq analyst and senior

researcher at the Al-Bayan Centre for Studies and Planning in Baghdad.

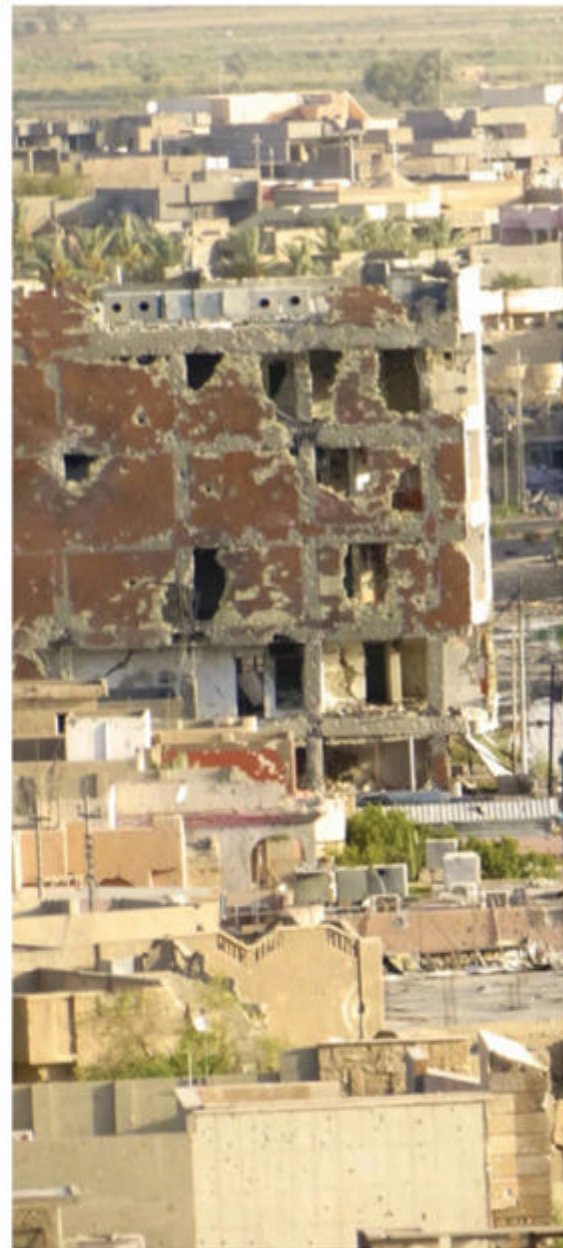
Just how desperate the reality on the ground is becoming in Iraq was clear on 18 May, the day after Ramadi fell. Anbar province, where Ramadi sits, is the heart of Sunni Islam in Iraq. It was where tribal leaders worked effectively with US forces in 2007 and 2008, during the so-called Anbar Awakening, to rout Isis's predecessor, al-Qaida. Many who fought then came to feel politically disenfranchised, however, under the deeply sectarian leadership of former prime minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shiite leader, and an ally of Iran. Some of the Sunni tribes in Anbar now support Isis, and others are deeply divided as to whether to support the current government in Baghdad, led by Haider al-Abadi, who though also Shiite is not necessarily considered as hostile to the country's Sunnis as his predecessor was. On 18 May, the Anbar provincial council voted to accept help from Shiite militias - armed and guided by Tehran - in order to help take back Ramadi. "At this stage," says Sheikh Abu Majid al-Zoyan, a tribal leader, "we welcome any force that will come and liberate us from the chokehold of the Islamic State."

#### How did we get here?

If Isis is winning, it is because of a "series of mistakes made by its opponents," says Lina Khatib, director of the Carnegie Middle East Center. "I describe Isis as water that seeps into the cracks - the cracks of policy and strategy of the international community."

Start in Syria: one of the underrated aspects of Isis's allure has been, simply, its wealth. Whether through oil sales or extortion, Isis is not only able to pay fighters more than a moderate opposition group like the Free Syrian Army (FSA) can, it has set up social welfare services - just as Hamas has long done - that provide a war-weary population with "monetary gains and social services," says Khatib. For example in Raqqa, the so-called capital of the Islamic State, Isis now provides medical services. The international community's response, she believes, has been inadequate. It has focused - belatedly - on training and arming the moderate opposition, and it has done little to counter Isis's economic strength.

The US is often seen as unresponsive, even by groups it is trying to help. Khatib says FSA officials with whom she had recently met had asked the US State Department for assistance in setting up courts to adjudicate disputes in areas it controls in the southern part of the country. "They never got a response," she says. The FSA in the south "has the potential to transform itself into a governing body. It has credibility on the ground. It needs help though, beyond just equip and train."



**Battered Iraq: above, damaged houses in besieged**

Beyond that, military analysts view the very limited campaign of airstrikes against Isis positions in Syria as "half-baked," as one former intelligence official in the region put it. And anytime the strikes kill civilians, Isis propaganda follows - See, it's a crusade against Muslim lands! - "and their popularity goes up". The current campaign, he says, "is too limited to have much of an impact. It just isn't working".

It's not working in Iraq, either, analysts say. Abadi may be less sectarian than Maliki, but the lack of trust between Sunnis in Anbar and Baghdad is profound. "It's a Herculean task for al-Abadi to mend that, and it's going to take a long time," says Khatib. The decision to send the Shiite militias to fight in Anbar was also a





Ramadi, which has finally fallen to Isis after 17 months' fighting. Front page, Isis troops in Raqqa celebrate the declaration of a caliphate last year

**'Isis is the water that seeps into the cracks – the cracks of policy and strategy of the international community'**

watershed - and further tarnishes the US strategy in the country. According to Jiyad, the Iraqi analyst, the US had an agreement with Abadi that it would take care of Anbar, where its "surge" had for a time pacified the region. The US sought that agreement because it didn't want the prime minister to have to rely on Shiite militias with links to Iran to fight Isis in the predominantly Sunni region.

Washington didn't want that for two obvious reasons: one, sectarian tension is high enough in the country, and the insertion of the militias increases the risk of an intensifying sectarian civil war. Secondly, it wanted to refute the widespread belief in the region among its traditional Sunni Arab allies - Jordan, Saudi

Arabia and the other Gulf States - that in pursuit of a nuclear agreement with Tehran, Washington had effectively thrown its friends over the side. So the US would redouble its efforts to train up Iraqi troops in Anbar and hit Isis with air power.

That plan is now in tatters. "The fall of Ramadi is a disaster," says Jiyad. The US, he says, "failed to airdrop in supplies, they failed to hit [Isis] hard enough from the air. The American involvement was weak."

#### **What do we do now?**

According to several Iraqi sources and analysts, Washington compounded the damage of Ramadi's fall in its immediate aftermath. New Defense Secretary Ashton Carter blamed the defeat on the Iraqi army

and said it lacked the will to fight. Those remarks infuriated Iraqi elites. They note that the army had been fighting Isis in Ramadi for 17 months.

"The way this is being portrayed is that this happened all of a sudden - that Isis attacked and the army ran away. That's not what happened," says one Arab diplomat in Baghdad. The army was stretched and tired, says Jiyad. "They figured 'We could fight to the death and the city will fall anyway'. So instead, retreat and regroup. They were pragmatic. They made the right decision."

The fight for Anbar will now only enhance Tehran's influence - exactly the opposite of what Washington wanted. And Qassem Suleimani, the head of the Iranian Republican Guard's Quds force, was scathing in his review of the US performance against Isis. "Mr Obama, you have not done a damn thing in Iraq," he said on 24 May, according to Iranian press reports. "You have no will to confront Daesh," he added, using the Arabic term for Isis.

In Syria, the Assad regime is going to have to rely on Iranian proxies and cash to stop Isis's advances. The idea that Iran is on the march in the region and the US seemed unconcerned about it, was, of course, already widespread (witness the Sunni boycott of Obama's recently convened summit to discuss the Iran nuclear deal and regional security.) Now Sunni governments are in the uncomfortable position of watching Tehran emerge as the first line of defence against Isis. Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based Iranian proxy, vowed on 23 May that his men would fight "wherever necessary" in Syria to roll back Isis gains. The Iranians, an intelligence official in the region says, "have been more responsive, more flexible and more effective than anyone else. It's a simple fact."

Against this backdrop, the discussion about Isis in the US often seems surreal to people in the region. The more hawkish members of the policy community are again talking about putting more boots on the ground. "There is no possibility of actually defeating Isis without putting a significant number of US troops on the ground and training up especially Syrians who will take the fight to Isis, but also Sunni tribesmen in Iraq," says Michael Doran, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, who worked on the staff of the national security council under President George W Bush.

Analysts are divided as to whether a significant number of troops are needed to defeat Isis, but Doran acknowledges political reality makes that notion a nonstarter. There is virtually no chance

that Obama will significantly increase the number of US troops, because there is no stomach for that among US voters. Less well-understood is the political reality in Iraq. "The Iraqis would refuse," says Jiyad.

The US and its partners also now confront this reality: far from being a ragtag terrorist group, Isis is proving to be a cunning, dangerous enemy - thanks largely, analysts say, to former Iraqi military officers who served under Saddam Hussein, and then joined the insurgency. They are battle-hardened and tactically adept.

One of the things made clear by the fall of Ramadi was Isis's extensive use of sleeper cells, who rose up in support as the combat intensified. Military analysts believe there are similar cells in Baghdad, ready to further destabilise security there. Baghdad, because of a large Shiite presence, will probably not fall to Isis, but there is potential to increase the level of violence.

For Washington, despite the obvious downside of an intensified air campaign - civilian casualties - that is probably the only realistic option. There has been an average of just 15 airstrikes a day in the degrade-and-destroy mission - compared with around 800 during the "shock and awe" campaign that kicked off the 2003 Iraq invasion.

The 3,000 US troops the US has deployed to Iraq are stuck behind the wire, analysts say. Even Canadian special forces have more room to manoeuvre than their American counterparts, sources say. The rules of engagement need to be loosened, and US forces need to be more involved in calling in airstrikes, as well as working more closely with Iraqi special operators to go after key Isis members in the country. The overarching problem with that tactic is this: with Shiite militias deployed to confront Isis in Anbar, a more intense

US-led air campaign will again conjure up the notion of the US Air Force effectively turning into an arm of the Iranian military, a prospect senior Pentagon officials hardly relish. At the same time, the US is training Sunni tribal fighters at the al-Asad air base northwest of Ramadi. "It remains to be seen," says Theodore Bell, an analyst at the Washington based Institute for the Study of War, "how the Iraqi government will integrate the [Sunni and Shia] forces to beneficial effect."

An intensified air campaign - if it comes - will have regional reverberations. As the day draws near that Iran and the P5 plus one (the US and its international partners) sign a nuclear deal that Sunni governments in the region believe puts Tehran on an internationally-approved path to the bomb, the images of ramped up US air strikes in support of Shiite fighters in Iraq will drive Riyadh, Amman & Co to distraction. A Sunni revolt is already underway in the region: in Syria, in the proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Yemen, and in the support for Isis among a significant portion of Sunnis in Anbar. Does the Sunni-Shia war in the Middle East and North Africa now intensify?

Washington has said it seeks a Sunni-Shia balance of power in the region, and hopes that would be stabilising. It has tried to reassure Sunni allies with more robust security arrangements. Events on the ground are anything but stabilising, however, and it's hard to see how that changes anytime soon. ■



**Bill Powell** is the Newsweek Asia Editor based in Shanghai. In the past he was the Newsweek Bureau chief in Moscow, Tokyo and Berlin.

**Why the Middle East is not our fault. Review, Page 62**



MOHAMMED SAWAF/AL MOHAMMED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES






Faces of war: above, a child cries as thousands flee Ramadi after Isis took the city in April. Left, Shiite volunteers train to fight jihadists in Iraq









Hagia Sophia has dominated the Istanbul skyline for 14 centuries as a church, mosque and museum.

As elections loom on 7 June, a campaign to claim it for Islam has started a war between Islamists and secularists – the most powerful symbol yet of Turkey's decisive turn away from the West

# THE BATTLE FOR TURKEY'S SOUL

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**BY OWEN MATTHEWS IN ISTANBUL  
WITH ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY SILA ALICI**





empires have risen and fallen, but the dome of the great basilica remains, dominating the skyline of Istanbul for the past 14 centuries. Built by the Roman emperor Justinian in 532 as the Church of the Holy Wisdom, the Hagia Sophia served as the principal church of Eastern Christianity for 916 years. When the Turkish Sultan Mehmet II captured the city in 1453, he stopped at the monumental porch and stooped to scatter dust on his turban as a gesture of humility before Allah the Victory-Giver.

On Mehmet's order, the church became the mosque of Ayasofya (the Turkish spelling), a symbol of the triumph of the Ottoman Turks and of the supremacy of Islam. In 1935, the founder of modern Turkey, Kemal Atatürk, ordered Ayasofya opened as a museum, a symbol of the secular, modern republic he was forging from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. "Atatürk made the Hagia Sophia a monument to what Turkey could become," said Anthony Eastmond, AG Leventis Reader in the history of Byzantine art at London's Courtauld Institute of Art. "By turning it from a mosque into a museum, he made it a place for all people."

Now the Hagia Sophia (the usual English spelling) has once again become a symbol - this time of the very contemporary battle for the soul of Turkey between Islamists and secularists. Vocal religious-conservative activists, some with links to the ruling Justice and Development (AK)

Party, are pressuring the government to reconsecrate the site for Islam. One day in late May, as busloads of bemused tourists looked on, a crowd of more than 1,000 protesters gathered in front of the museum carrying placards saying, "Ayasofya must be reopened as a mosque" and "May our lives be sacrificed for Islam." Many of the men wore beards and white skullcaps; the women modeled a very Turkish mix of the stylish and religious, sporting silk headscarves and expensive sunglasses while brandishing black and green flags printed with Koranic verses.

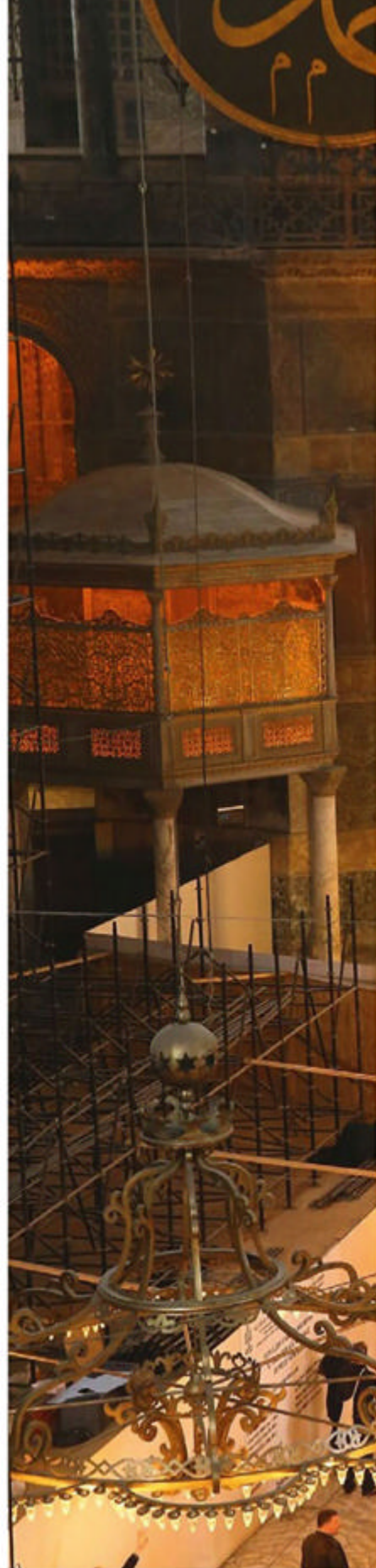
"Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror brought peace to people of all religions," said Hacı Murat Uzgur of the Anatolia Youth Association, a conservative non-governmental organisation that last year collected 15 million signatures supporting conversion to a mosque. "Hagia Sophia is the symbol of peace, justice and tranquillity for all of humanity." But many onlookers at the rally were more alarmed than pacified. "Where are these people from?" asked Mustafa Sonmez, the proprietor of a historic kebab house opposite the dome. "They want to make our country into Iran."

The conversion of the Hagia Sophia would be the most powerful symbol yet of a decisive turn by Turkey away from the West and toward Islam. And the campaign for conversion is gathering strength. In April, after Pope Francis labelled the mass killings of the Ottoman Armenians in 1915 as "the first genocide of the 20th century," the Grand Mufti of Ankara, professor Mefail Hizli, predicted that "the Pope's remarks will only accelerate the process for Hagia Sophia to be reopened for [Muslim] worship." He also denounced the Pope as a "modern Crusader".

Around the same time, a Muslim cleric recited the Koran in the Hagia Sophia for the first time in 85 years. The occasion was the opening of a new exhibition of calligraphic work in devotion to the Prophet Mohammed, called Love of the Prophet. All the leaders from Turkey's religious establishment gathered to mark the symbolic moment. And ever since 2012, Turkey's chief mufti has recruited Istanbul's most gifted muezzins to read the five-times-daily adhan (call to prayer) from a small Islamic sanctuary on the grounds of the Ayasofya Museum, transmitted especially loud through speakers on its stumpy brick minaret.

#### The modern crusaders

Turkey's culture wars are coming to a head with 7 June parliamentary elections that will determine whether it changes its constitution to a presidential one. Such a move could give the increasingly autocratic president, Recep Tayyip



Big draw: visitors walk through the Hagia





Sophia museum. Kemal Atatürk made the Hagia Sophia a secular “monument to what Turkey could become”



'Ayasofya is the symbol of Istanbul's conquest. Without it, the conquest is incomplete'



Erdogan, sweeping new powers. If his party wins a super-majority of 66% in the parliament, he would be allowed to change the constitution. More likely, though, support for his AK Party will slip. Polls show that voters are dissatisfied with Erdogan's handling of the economy. Under the AK Party, Turkey has enjoyed a sustained economic boom unrivalled in the region or in the West. In 2002, per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) averaged \$3,600, just ahead of Equatorial Guinea, but by 2013 it had tripled to \$11,000. Turkey is now comfortably among the world's top 20 economies, with an annual GDP of more than \$800bn.

But growth has fallen from 4% in 2013 to 2.9% last year - still way ahead of the stagnant European Union, but too slow for many voters. Erdogan has also lost support among Turkey's 15-million-strong Kurdish population, who have defected in droves to the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party, which is expected to pass the 10% threshold to enter the parliament and spoil Erdogan's dream of creating a powerful Russian- or US-style executive presidency.

Over his 13 years in power, Erdogan - who was jailed in 1999 for reading a banned religious poem during a speech - has scrapped a ban on Islamic headscarves in universities, removed restrictions on religious schools and tightened laws on alcohol. A decade ago, Turkey was obsessed with joining the EU. Now its diplomacy is largely focused on leading the Muslim world. So far, Erdogan has held off from publicly backing calls for the conversion of Hagia Sophia. But for many Turks - including deputy prime minister and AK Party co-founder Bülent Arinc, who already refers to the "Hagia Sophia mosque" - the conversion of the monument is the logical next step in the inexorable Islamisation of the Turkish Republic. "Ayasofya is a symbol for the Islamic world and the symbol of Istanbul's conquest," says Salih Turan, head of the Anatolia Youth Association. "Without it, the conquest is incomplete."

Clearly, the Hagia Sophia campaign is not just about Islam - it's about Turkish nationalism too. For most of the 20th century, Western-oriented Turks scorned their country's imperial past, and the legacy of Islam. "I wish all religions at the





bottom of the sea,” Atatürk told an interviewer in 1926, denouncing the last sultan as “a weak ruler who needs religion to uphold his government ... My people are going to learn the principles of democracy, the dictates of truth and the teachings of science. Superstition must go.”

Erdogan’s government has not only reversed the republic’s aversion to Islam but also glorified Mehmet the Conqueror and the Ottoman past. “Conquest means the removal of shackles on people’s hearts,” Erdogan told a rally on the anniversary of the fall of Constantinople on 29 May last year. “With conquest came civilisation.”

Erdogan has made a point of meeting visiting heads of state at his new presidential palace in Ankara, flanked by fiercely mustachioed re-enactors dressed in medieval Turkic armour and weaponry. A 2012 film depicting the dramatic siege of Constantinople, *Conquest 1453*, has been a huge box-office hit, and so has *Magnificent Century*, a Tudors-style TV drama about the 16th-century Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. A new Panorama 1453 museum opened in 2009 near the spot where the Ottoman

forces broke through the city’s walls and killed the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XII, and has also been enormously popular.

#### ‘The streets are ours’

The Hagia Sophia controversy holds a mirror not just to Turkey’s growing Islamism and nationalism but also to a growing divide between the cultural values of conservative Anatolia – the AK Party’s voter base – and those of godless, cosmopolitan Istanbul. This was the fault line that sparked a three-month standoff in 2013 over plans to build a mosque and shopping mall in downtown Istanbul’s Gezi Park. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets, and the government lost control of the city centre for weeks. The protests were eventually crushed by a massive show of police force that left 11 dead and more than 8,000 injured.

The AK Party has also incensed secular Istanbul residents by cracking down on alcohol being served at street-side restaurant tables or near mosques or schools. The AK Party leadership has also proposed a vast mosque on Camlica Hill, the

**Troubled Turkey: anti-government protesters on the streets of Istanbul. left. Above, Armenian refugees on the deck of a French cruiser that rescued them from the genocide of 1915**





**Fount of heritage:** “The richness of this city is that it is composed of many historical levels; Byzantium is one of them,” says one archaeologist

highest spot in the city, and another on Yassiada, an abandoned prison island where former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was sentenced to death after a military coup in 1960.

“This is a very proud city – we are ready to fight for it,” says Salih K, a member of the Istanbul graffiti-art group Sokaklar Bizimdir (which translates as “The Streets Are Ours”). With his skater sneakers and baseball cap, Salih would not look out of place in Berlin or Los Angeles. Like many of the protesters who braved police tear gas in the Gezi protests, he feels that the identity and freedom he fought for is under threat from a conservative, Middle Eastern ethos imposed from Ankara. “If these guys want a place to pray, fine,” says Salih. “Let them pray back home, in the village. Don’t bring all this stuff here to the city. We want to live in the 21st century.”

The debate also highlights another worrying development: Turkey’s growing authoritarianism and intolerance for dissent. In May 2014, in response to a draft law calling for the conversion of Hagia Sophia to a mosque, tabled by AK Party dissident deputy Hami Yildirim, a group of 28 Turkish and foreign academics wrote an open letter to the government decrying the proposal

as “insensitive” and “misguided,” and 1,200 Ottoman and Byzantine experts from around the world added their signatures. Ever since, says one of the original signatories, who requested anonymity, “I have been subjected to threats and nasty anonymous letters”.

“There is a culture of fear over telling the non-Muslim past of this country,” says the academic, a world-renowned Byzantinist. “These people fear that this Christian past will somehow interfere with the ability of people to be good Muslims.” Several of the signatories say they have had promotions blocked and have been shunned by fellow academics. “Our ability to speak out is being silenced,” says one. “These attacks have become the norm.”

#### **Whitewash**

The debate has also pitted Turkey’s conservative politicians and clerics against the world’s archaeological and museum community, as well as Unesco, which lists Hagia Sophia as a World Heritage Site. The museum is Turkey’s most-visited monument, drawing around 3.3 million visitors in 2012.

“Now the building is open to all, regardless of



religion or gender,” says the Courtauld Institute’s Eastmond. “If converted to a mosque, there would be different access for men and for women. When it was turned into a museum, both the Christian and Muslim aspects [of the Hagia Sophia] were represented.”

In particular, the opening of the museum allowed the church’s magnificent mosaics, which are among the finest surviving examples of medieval Byzantine art, to be put on display for the first time in half a millennium. (The mosaics, covered up in the 15th century, were rediscovered by Swiss restorers in the 1840s but whitewashed over again at the insistence of the Ottoman authorities.) These would have to be screened or covered if the site became a mosque again.

Such a radical makeover has happened twice already in recent years. Another important 12th-century Byzantine church, the Hagia Sophia in the Black Sea city of Trabzon, was turned into a mosque in 2013, resulting in priceless frescoes being covered up and the medieval mosaic floors being concealed under carpets, to the horror of historians and disappointment of tourists.

The same fate has befallen another Hagia Sophia, this time in the northeastern Turkish city of Iznik. The city was formerly known as Nicaea and is where bishops from across the Roman Empire gathered for the First Ecumenical Council in the year 325 and formulated the Nicene Creed, which is repeated at every Christian Mass. And this month the local council of the Enez district of Edirne – the ancient Adrianopolis – decreed that the ruins of a third Hagia Sophia, also dating to the 12th century, are to be renovated as a mosque, overturning earlier plans to restore it as a museum.

“The core of these monuments is Byzantine. They were designed and built in Byzantine times, and there are architectural features that are lost when they are transformed into mosques,” says an Istanbul-based scholar, who asked for anonymity because of fear of reprisals. “This is a way of distorting architectural authenticity of the buildings.”

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom, a bipartisan advisory panel set up by Congress, has warned that “opening Hagia Sophia as a mosque would clearly be a divisive and provocative move” that could threaten Turkey’s international standing and reopen grievances over its mistreatment of Armenian and Greek Christians over the past century. Mostly, though, international scholars hate the idea of converting Hagia Sophia because it emphasises one layer of the city’s history over all others. “The richness of this city is that it is

composed of many historical levels; Byzantium is one of them,” says Alessandra Ricci, an archaeologist who has spent a decade excavating a major Byzantine monastery in the Istanbul suburb of Kucukyali.

Even those who are lobbying for the conversion of Istanbul’s Hagia Sophia acknowledge that their campaign is about symbolism, not about providing places of worship. Istanbul boasts more than 3,000 mosques – and the closest one to the Hagia Sophia, the vast 17th-century Sultanahmet mosque, is almost empty of worshippers.

Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the senior Patriarch of all Orthodox Churches, has a flock among Istanbul’s dwindling Greek Orthodox community that numbers just 5,000. But he is head of a worldwide expatriate Greek community of over 300,000 and believes his Church has the best claim to ownership of the basilica.

“The Hagia Sophia basilica was built in testimony to Christian faith and if it is to be returned to worship, it cannot be any other than a Christian one,” Bartholomew told reporters earlier this year.

Some Turkish commentators have suggested that some areas of the building be designated to different faiths. “People like me would like to see the shrine reopened to worship as a mosque/church, where both faiths can share the place for their respective rituals, with respect to each other,” says Mustafa Akyol, author of *Islam without Extremes: A Muslim Case for Liberty*. “But I doubt that the ‘New Turkey’ of Erdogan will foster such a liberal ecumenism. It rather seems to be engaged in a defiant triumphalism.”

Polls indicate Turkey’s coming elections are likely to dampen Erdogan’s super-Presidential ambitions – and may even see his party yoked into a coalition for the first time. But calls from religious conservatives to convert the Hagia Sophia will likely continue.

That is until Turkey learns to come to terms with its heritage – which means steering a line between suppressing Islam, as Atatürk did, and promoting it at the expense of all the other cultures. “After all,” writes blogger Nervana Mahmoud, “we cannot change history; we can only learn from it. ■



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“The Hagia Sophia basilica was built in testimony to Christian faith and if it is to be returned to worship, it cannot be any other than a Christian one”



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# WEEKEND

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# REVISITING THE HIDDEN BEAUTIES OF PARIS

In 1968, the wittily vitriolic architecture writer Ian Nairn published a guide to the French capital. As his work is revived, *Newsweek* seeks out the treasures he once found



If you resist Paris, wrote the English topographer Ian Nairn in 1968, “it will kick you

back”. Give in to its charms, though, and you’ll find “the whole city is urging you to greater depth of feeling, the opposite effect of a Birmingham”. This is from *Nairn’s Paris*, the second of two remarkably original city guides he published in the 1960s, which combined informed, precise architectural criticism with robust, sometimes oblique prose, a vitriolic humour and an eye for the bizarre.

Nairn made his name in Britain between the 1950s and 1970s first with journalism and books, and then from TV programmes where he explored unlikely destinations - power stations, derelict railway stations, motorway services, as well as stately homes and castles - in an attempt both to awaken readers and viewers to the qualities of what was around them and to denounce the reduction of place to “a uniform and mediocre pattern”, which he called “Subtopia”.

After decades of neglect since he drank himself to death in the early 1980s, Nairn has become a minor cult, and is once again in print, with an updated edition of his 1965 *Britain’s Changing Towns* (as *Nairn’s Towns*), a new anthology, *Nairn’s County Durham*, a book of appreciations, *Words in Place*, and earlier this year, a Penguin reprint of his classic *Nairn’s*

*London*. Still out of print, however - and going for crazy amounts of money on Amazon - is its companion volume, *Nairn’s Paris*. I followed Nairn’s paths around the UK to edit and update *Nairn’s Towns*, and found his critiques sometimes vindicated, sometimes puzzling, and often making suggestions that had been applied with very mixed results. So how does *Nairn’s Paris* shape up as a guide to the French capital today?

Unlike *Nairn’s London*, which tackles a city with obvious borders, first the Greater London Council and then the M25, *Nairn’s Paris* goes far beyond the Boulevard Périphérique into the banlieue and beyond, taking “Paris” to mean the entire Ile de France region, and even nearby towns like Chartres and Reims. Historic Paris makes up less than half the book.

His depiction of Paris proper is admiring, but distant compared with the enclaves and hiding places he finds in London. Like that book, *Nairn’s Paris* features his wonderful amateur photographs, picking up on details, not vistas - pylons, signs, park benches, railings. The difference is that “Paris is a collective masterpiece, perhaps the greatest in the world”, and planned as such. London is a haphazard tie-up of towns and villages into a vaguely coherent metropolis; so it is a challenge for Nairn’s approach to describe a city dominated by masterpieces and ensembles, not by eccentricities.

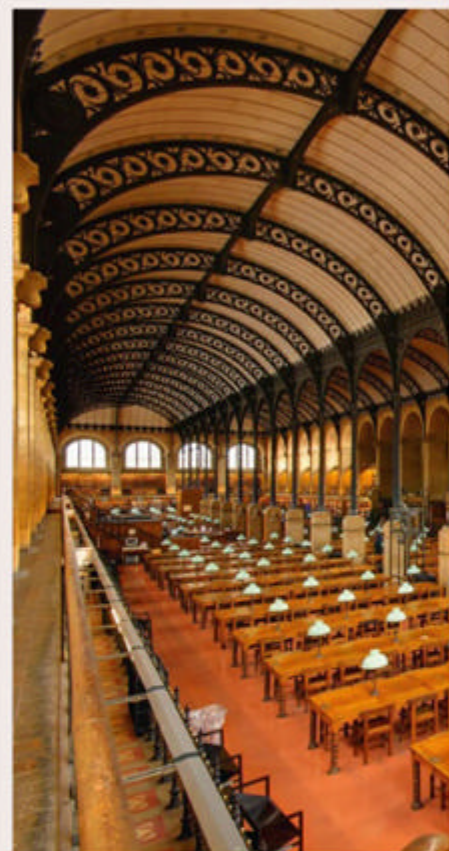
As an Englishman abroad, he registers the contrasts, noting the way Paris uses the Seine properly compared with London’s “apology for an embankment”, spots the poetry of the Paris Métro’s station

names compared with the impersonality of the London Underground - “what administrator could invent a poetic conjunction as rich as Sèvres-Babylone?” - and offers tips on purchasing sex (in Pigalle, we’re told, you’ll find “the specifically Parisian and very attractive attributes of sex - light-hearted, expert, guilt-free”). I can’t report whether those attributes still exist but Nairn’s disappointment at Pigalle as another Haussmann district with somewhat seedier adverts still describes it well.

He has obviously tramped miles and miles of Paris, and warns that “of all the famous attractions only the Eiffel Tower, the Opéra and the Louvre Colonnade live up to their reputation”. There are harsh words on everything from Montmartre (“the Hampstead of Paris, equally phoney”) to the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, “an endless office of worship, like the Gregorian chant that always seems to be going on inside”.

Similarly denounced is the grandest of the formal ensembles, the Place de la Concorde - “everyone has said that it was marvellous for so long that mankind has taken itself in by its own flattery”. However, the view of the Champs-Élysées from here is worth a visit in itself - sloping away from the square, it’s “a-swarm with car roofs: a lake of metal ants that suddenly disperse in front of the huge scale of the arch”. That startling vision is still what you see if you look westwards here.

Characteristically, Nairn guides you to



the strange spaces in the interstices of the squares and boulevards - the Passage du Caire, a “slice of the city under glass”, or the Bibliothèque Saint-Geneviève, a university library near the Pantheon, where an austere classical

exterior conceals a pioneering iron-and-glass reading hall. This is his “perfect French building” - “intelligent, adaptable, concise and well ahead of its time”. He notes that the library staff will let you in to have a look, and we join a small group



## While you're there

See the archeological crypt preserving Roman Paris, or Lutetia, as visited by Asterix





of tourists to boggle at the warm, sublime vaults. Visiting today, you aren't allowed beyond the entrance to the hall but it's enough to get a full view of the vaults, beautifully preserved and still much in use by students.

Most of all, Nairn recommends the east end, where Ménilmontant and Belleville are his "personal Champs-Élysées", a messy mix contrasting with the boulevards of Haussmann. You enter this world through the Place de la République, the Parisian planner's most obviously militaristic square, designed as "a shrewd bit of 'stop-it' planning, preventing the growth of free thought in

undisciplined warrens of streets and providing a clear line of fire". You finish up at La Villette, where Ledoux's classical gateway is caught between canals and Métro viaducts, "a brilliant set of geometrical jokes".

Appropriately for a book on Paris published in 1968, Nairn captures the tensions that would explode that May, raging at the way that the Gare d'Orsay lies derelict, waiting to be turned into "some wall-eyed exposition of l'urbanisme"; preserved as the Musée d'Orsay, its great arched roof now shelters a wall-eyed exposition of gesturing academic sculpture.

Beyond the Périphérique, Nairn ventures into the *terrains*



**High points: Nairn's "perfect French building", the Bibliothèque Saint-Geneviève, and the "piquant" Bobigny housing estate in 1959**

*vagues* ("vague indeed") like the new town of Sarcelles, where the rectilinear blocks create "a bewildering experience halfway through dream and vertigo". As in a lot of Nairn's critiques, he makes it sound fascinating. Nearby, he stops at one of the shanty towns, bidonvilles, and finds a "basic sense of identity" lacking in the new towns. The bidonvilles have disappeared, but the planned satellite towns of the banlieue remain - erupting into huge riots 10 years

## Field Guide

**The book** *Nairn's Paris* is presently out of print. Second-hand copies are being offered on Amazon, with prices ranging from around €40 to around €250.

**What to watch** Perhaps Nairn's best-known intellectual descendant, Jonathan Meades, whose idiosyncratic, hyper-articulate architecture programs can be found on YouTube.

ago this summer. Nairn finds the banlieue's centrepiece, La Defense, promising "all sorts of goodies" but half-finished. It's now a set of glass skyscrapers with overhead walkways weaving between, which lead westwards to Nanterre and a huge housing estate by architect Eric Aillaud, built in the 1970s.

Nairn commended Aillaud's earlier estates in Pantin and Bobigny as "piquant" attempts to create "identity and community" against Alphavilles like Sarcelles. Here at Nanterre was the culmination of that project, its 18 towers shaped into strange tubular forms, dressed in multicoloured, patterned mosaics around snaking, multi-level paths. Perhaps Nairn would have found this as "bewildering" as Sarcelles or as "phoney" as Montmartre.

But on a spring day, with the towers shaded by lush trees and children playing on its artificial hills, the banlieue has its own collective masterpieces.



**By Owen Hatherley**

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# AT LAST FAT GETS A CHANCE

Hollywood has long alienated audiences by mocking the overweight, but in new spoof *Spy*, an oversized(!), middle-aged(!) woman(!) comes into her own



**Rudolph Herzog**  
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Fat people get a rough deal in Hollywood. Starting with Fatty Arbuckle and Oliver Hardy, they usually feature to be ridiculed. Dressed up in hot pants or tight ballet outfits, they prance around for cheap laughs, or get stuck in windows and sewage pipes from which they have to be extracted. Overweight women rarely feature at all, save as gluttons, hysterics or embodiments of evil. It's hardly surprising the net is teeming with posts from those offended by shows like *Dance Your Ass Off* or comedies like *The Nutty Professor*, in which Eddie Murphy was put in a fat suit.

"I couldn't stop crying," writes one upon discovering three new characters in a Disney theme park: Glutton, Lead Bottom and Snacker, a trio of evil fat bugs who pig out on burgers and fries (the characters have since been replaced). The irony of anti-obesity campaigns such as this is that overweight people - particularly children - respond negatively to humiliation and typecasting. Studies have found that shaming fat people *increases* the risk of harmful behaviours like binge eating.

While public health is hardly on the agendas of media multinationals, some studios are starting to realise they have

**When and where**  
*Spy* will be released across Europe this month.



**Action heroine: Melissa McCarthy as CIA agent Susan Cooper**

not only neglected but outright alienated a significant part of their audiences. *Spy*, a new release by 20th Century Fox, underscores the seismic shift taking place in development departments of the majors.

*Spy* would be a straightforward James Bond spoof except that the film's protagonist, CIA agent Susan Cooper (Melissa McCarthy) is not only overweight but also likeable and bright. In fact, she ends up outsmarting her slim, young opponents, of whom there are many.

The film starts with Susan pushing paper in the rat-infested basement of the Langley HQ. Despite getting top grades in training, she has never been considered for the field because of her oversize frame. Consequently, Susan's self-confidence is close to zero and she thinks

of her life as a "disaster". She's also keenly aware of already being middle-aged (another Hollywood no-no).

Yet by a sudden twist of fate, Susan is propelled to the frontline. Since she has never left her appalling workspace, Susan is the only person in the CIA whose face is not known to Raina Boyanov (Rose Byrne), an evil Bulgarian woman about to sell a stolen nuclear weapon to terrorists. Susan volunteers to become Raina's shadow.

The film now applies all the spy movie clichés to someone trapped in a stereotype.

Instead of giving her an exciting secret identity, Susan's superiors plonk a ridiculous wig on her head and make her pretend she is a Kansas housewife who won a trip around the world by playing bingo. The CIA's gadget man hands her secret weapons, but instead of concealing them in diamond earrings, they are hidden in packs of laxatives and haemorrhoid cream.

She is instructed to "observe only" but, needless to say, Susan ignores these orders and embarks on car chases, fistfights and hands-on-action worthy of a James Bond. The wig ends up in the dustbin and Susan morphs into the glamorous operative "Amber", who just happens to be a bit on the large side.

As a final coup de grace, Susan butchers one of the Eastern European babes she has always both envied and detested. The film's message is as unsubtle as it could possibly be: overweight people should feel more at ease with their fat. None of this makes for a particularly good film (and good-looking Eastern Europeans may be offended), but the effect could be helpful. While dishonest political correctness won't remedy the obesity epidemic, it is clear that what we're doing at the moment is making things worse.

## ... but Gyllenhaal is deemed "too old"

Hollywood routinely parades some groups, such as fat people or dwarfs, for cheap laughs (see *The Man with the Golden Gun* or "Mini-me" in *Austin Powers*). Others, such as women north of 35, are often ignored entirely. Actress Maggie Gyllenhaal, 37, left, was recently told she is "too old" to star opposite a man almost two decades her senior. Combine fat and middle-aged and you have got exactly the type of woman who is as rare as a snow leopard in Hollywood movies.



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME

Intricate, ostentatious, modernist or rococo, the watches in a new exhibition are worth crawling over broken glass to see



**Nick Foulkes**  
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I have to admit to a fairly massive bias, in that I am writing the official history of Patek Philippe, so I can hardly be counted as an impartial visitor to the Watch Art exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery. But having loved it since childhood, watchmaking retains a magical quality for me. I find the idea of a mechanical microcosm of hundreds of clever little components that can be made to predict the movements of the planets or just give you the time of day, all bound in a pebble of gold, a bewitching one.

Just in case you have been living under a rock, Patek Philippe is the watch that, according to the tagline, you never actually own but merely look after for the next generation. The firm has been around for the past 176 years and has had just two sets of family owners, first the families of Patek and Philippe and then, when the Depression threatened its survival, the Stern family who still own and operate the company. It enjoys sacred status with watch collectors and, for the watch geek who wants to gorge on Patek's production past and present, this is a show

**When and where**  
**The Patek Philippe Watch Art Grand Exhibition is at the Saatchi Gallery, King's Road, London SW3 until 7 June**

worth crawling over broken glass to get to.

What intrigues me is that, as a civilisation, we have come to place a high financial and emotional value on the watch - it is the object with which many people choose to mark the important moments in life - and yet, worn next to skin and looked at dozens if not hundreds of times a day, it is also one of the most familiar.

More than just a status-conferring object, a watch is just as capable of inspiring powerful feeling as a painting or sculpture; towards the end of last year an anonymous collector paid more than \$24,000,000 for a Patek that had been commissioned by a New York financier called Henry Graves: Picasso money for an object just a few centimetres across.

Graves himself sounds like your standard Gilded Age American plutocrat who would be unremembered today were it not for the watch that bears his name. And it is because of the value that we have accorded the watch (whether pocket, pendant or wrist) that over the years certain pieces have - through the ingenuity with which they were devised, the skill with which they were wrought, the creativity with which they were embellished and the patina of famous ownership - been elevated to the level of art.

There is a Patek Philippe Museum in Geneva and next time you are in Calvin's city I urge you to visit, as you will encounter some truly remarkable objects, a few almost half a millennium old (the collection is not solely devoted to Patek Philippe). However, if you happen to be in London this weekend you can



**Time through the ages: from top, Queen Victoria's watch, a 1936 aviator's watch and Elizabeth II's wristwatch on a bracelet of pearls**

catch some of the collection's highlights at the Saatchi Gallery: there is a pleasing irony to the fact that a space consecrated to contemporary art should be hosting objects some of which are many hundreds of years old.

We see a drum clock of the sort that the fashion leaders of the 1530s slung around their necks like giant medallions - today's oligarchs could learn a thing or two from the 16th century's blingocrats. We see rococo miniature enamel painting with something of Watteau, Pater or Fragonard about it. There is extravagant goldsmithing and lavish gem-setting, and there is unadorned functional simplicity, as in the saucer-sized aviator's watch of 1936 or the Staybrite stainless steel-cased antimagnetic Deck Chronometer, an essay in pared-down Miesian modernity.

Though Switzerland is a republic, Patek is proud of its regal client list and one gallery showcases watches made for royal families. History has dealt its cards to these kings and queens, many of whose thrones have disappeared and some of whom met grisly ends, but their timepieces remain. There is also a piece from a serving monarch. A wristwatch on a bracelet of pearls, it is something that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II apparently likes to wear to the opening of Parliament... happily for visitors to this exhibition she forwent that pleasure at the most recent convocation of our elected representatives.

The chance to compare Queen Elizabeth II's 21st century Patek Philippe with the ones that belonged to her great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria is worth the visit alone.



# HEAR EVERY LAST GASP

Earphones for the finest musical detail, Nespresso coffee in 25 seconds and why Apple's MacBook Air is still the go-to lightweight laptop

**Graham Boynton**

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There are moments on Leonard Cohen's *Famous Blue Raincoat* where his backing singers (Corlynn Hanney and Susan Mussman since you ask) draw breaths between their ethereal la-la-las, adding a sensuality and a dimension to the song I thought I knew well. I've been listening to *Famous Blue Raincoat* on and off for 40 years and this fine detail has for all that time completely eluded me. That gives you an idea how good the Shure SE215s, a pair of in-ear headphones, really are. Then I tried a little Miles Davis and Gil Evans on one of my favourite pieces of music, *Concierto de Aranjuez*. The detail on the castanets was just there, Miles floated in with that dreamy horn solo, and later the timpani came in precisely as Gil Evans wanted it: "just a whisper, a little cushion of air". Perfection.

As you have by now probably gathered, I am rather taken with these SE215s. While they are never going to be as good as



**Hallelujah: Leonard Cohen's song *Famous Blue Raincoat* reveals whole new sounds when heard through the Shure SE215 earphones, right**

the top-of-the-range over-ear models, they offer a rich and detailed sound that I am not used to getting from in-ear 'phones. Vocals are warm and full-bodied and yet there is detail and clarity, though they do lack the bass that you'll get from over-ears. Another criticism is that they are awkward to fit into the ears - you have to loop the cord over the top of your ears before

snugly inserting the earbud and the body of the headphone. It is a bit tricky but once inserted they are very comfortable, and a range of interchangeable buds of different sizes and materials - included in a travelling kit - means you can adjust to your particular physiognomy.

I'm not entirely convinced about the claims of sound isolation but it may be that I haven't yet found the perfect

buds. At €120 from Richer Sounds the SE215s are far cheaper than the top-of-the-range in-ear Shure SE535s (€466) and, although I haven't tested the 535s, I can't believe they are four times better. My point is that if you have resisted in-ears in the past, you may want to try the SE215s. They are great value and worth it for those la-la-las on *Famous Blue Raincoat* alone.



## Nespresso U

Much to my shame I must confess that I am a Nespresso owner and a Nespresso coffee addict. It's a bit like being a Moonie. Once you've signed up to this domestic coffee cult, you're pretty much hooked for life. And I do actually like at least six of the 12 coffee blends in the sleek metal capsules we Nespressites call "pods". So, add to the product mix the Nespresso U Coffee Machine range by



Krupps (from €182 for the smallest version to €253 with milk foamer from Nespresso.com). This sleek designer machine will deliver your coffee in just 25 seconds thanks to new fast-heating thermoblock technology and has three soft-touch controls that offer ristretto, espresso or lungo. And thanks to a power save mode the machine turns off automatically when not in use.

## MacBook Air, upgraded

Apple has upgraded its 13in MacBook Air with Broadwell processors (fifth generation of the Intel Core i5), faster flash storage and better graphics as well as an upgrade from Thunderbolt to Thunderbolt 2. The Air remains the go-to lightweight laptop that has led the field for five years. There are two screen sizes - 11.6in and 13.3in - the latter has a flash drive three times

faster than the best Windows laptop, while the smaller machine is 50% faster. It is just 17mm thick, weighs 1.35kg and has a quoted battery life of nine hours. However the Air doesn't come with a multi-million pixel retina screen like the MacBook Pro's, so I guess we shall have to wait for the next generation.

€1,199 with 128GB storage and €1,410 with 256 GB storage from Apple.





## When the Pharaoh was Prince Charming

Long long ago, before Walt Disney and even the Brothers Grimm, there were legends of beautiful girls who lose one shoe. The slipper-test, where the girl who fits the shoe gets the prince, goes back to 1st-century Egypt. Then, an eagle swooped on the shoe of a Greek slave girl called Rhodopis and carted it off to the Pharaoh, who would not rest until he found its owner. In 17th-century Naples Rhodopis became Cenerentola; 50 years later Charles Perrault added the glass slipper to the tale and it was his version Disney took up. One thing they all had in common? A happy ending.

# THE CINDERELLA COMPLEX

What is it about shoes? A delightful new show displays the follies and fantasies of mankind's long obsession with footwear



**Alice Hart-Davis**  
 @AliceHartDavis

It might, as the saying goes, be unwise to criticise someone until you have walked a mile in their shoes, but looking at the beautiful, extraordinary and sometimes plain terrifying array of footwear in *Shoes: Pleasure and Pain*, this summer's fashion exhibition at London's Victoria & Albert museum, the only possible conclusion to draw is that humankind is and has ever been a bunch of lunatics who completely lose their heads when it comes to their feet.

Going a bit mad because of

fabulous shoes is a familiar refrain through centuries of fiction, from Cinderella's ugly stepsisters lopping off toes to fit the glass slipper to Carrie Bradshaw, Sarah Jessica Parker's character from the *Sex and the City* TV series, lamenting that having spent \$40,000 on shoes - mostly her beloved Manolos - she had nowhere to live.

But what this delightful exhibition shows is that such foot-related folly is equally true in real life and that our modern passion for pretty or shocking shoes is nothing new. Its curator, Helen Persson, came up with the concept while exploring the museum's collection of Indian footwear.

"I found these amazing shoes that were gilded and tasseled and covered with pearls," she says. "They looked like something created by Roger Vivier. It made me wonder who these people were, and why they were wearing these shoes. I realised that even across different cultures and periods of history, we are exactly the same. We love shoes that say, 'Look at



**Stylish: top, parakeet shoes by Caroline Groves. Above, Indian gold on wood wedding shoes, 1800s**

me! I don't need to worry about working or walking'."

There are chopines, from Venice c1600, which are little kid slippers fastened atop a wooden stalk that lifted its wearer's skirt hems above the mud; there are 18th-century Indian shoes with extravagantly long, curled-back toes, tiny Chinese shoes for bound feet and, equally shudder-inducing, the ballet shoes designed for Moira Shearer in the film *The Red Shoes*.

There are ballet-fetish shoes, with their toes en pointe and heels so high that no wearer can stand unassisted, let alone walk, and Zaha Hadid's Nova shoes, which seem to challenge the

laws of physics with their cantilevered, unsupported, 16cm heel.

With glorious improbability, the exhibition is sponsored by Clarks, maker of thumpingly sensible shoes, and The Worshipful Company of Cordwainers, though Agent Provocateur has added its support and glamour.

But still, how is it that otherwise sane women - and men, too, just look at the wrinkle-pickers - abandon all sense when it comes to fashionable footwear? Surviving pointy medieval shoes show wear patterns that make it clear that their owners, too, suffered from bunions and hammer toes.

As Persson points out, shoes are powerful indicators of gender, status, identity, taste and sexual preference; they project an image of who we want to be. "It's that sensation when you put them on, of how your body changes," she says. "When I'm wearing high heels, I feel like I can kick some ass even if I can hardly walk. Wearing flats I feel I can run, jump. Shoes have this transformative power. We just know if we get the right pair of shoes, things will change, we will get what we want."

**When and where**  
**Shoes: Pleasure & Pain is at the Victoria & Albert Museum from 13 June-13 Jan 2016**



# THE HUNGER GAMES

The most promising new speed-guzzler in the mad world of competitive eating is a slight young woman. *Newsweek's* Alex Nazaryan meets up, and chows down

The server looked confused. In her hands were four plates, each loaded with a meaty sandwich and a heap of fries. But there were only two people at the outdoor table in downtown Sacramento, me and a smallish woman in a black hoodie, her ears adorned with multiple studs, her skin thoroughly tattooed. The server looked around, wondering if the food was for a table of four that had eluded her. It wasn't. The other waitress, who had taken our order, finally came out to explain the arrangement: for me, a single chorizo burger with garlic fries; for the unimposing woman across from me, a steak sandwich, a Philly chicken-and-cheese sandwich and a cheeseburger with mushrooms. And did I mention the glistening mounds of fries?

In the hour that followed, that waitress flitted by our table several times to watch the slight woman (55kg in weight; 170cm in height) across from me casually eating her way through the bulwark of grilled meat and fried carbohydrate before her. One sandwich disappeared, then another, then a third. The waitress appeared frightened, as if a rift in space-time were opening before her eyes, swallowing more food that a single person possibly could. As we ordered our dessert milkshakes, I felt it my duty to offer context for the digestive performance taking place on the patio of Burgers and Brews.

"This is Molly Schuyler," I said, pointing to the woman behind the stack of plates, on which not a sliver of French fry remained. "She is one of the best competitive eaters in the world." A woman whose CV includes consuming 363 wings in one contest and 26 burgers in another. The Stellanator; the

Death Pizza challenge; the Goliath Burger Challenge: triumphs, all.

Schuyler offered the waitress a proposition: she would eat the entire Burgers and Brews menu – which includes more than a dozen variations of hamburger alone – provided the restaurant covered her tab were she to 1) eat it all and 2) survive. The waitress wisely demurred.

Schuyler looked undaunted, and maybe a little peckish. "I could eat several more after this," she said before drinking her chocolate milkshake. I couldn't finish mine, so she gladly polished that off, too.

Some athletes run. Others throw, jump, hit. Molly Schuyler chews. Her skill is to be, in her words, a "bottomless pit", to eat beyond the limits of need or enjoyment, to eat so much so quickly that it is brilliant and pointless at once, like running a marathon in a Big Bird suit.

Schuyler is not yet as

well-known as the most famous competitive eaters in the world: Joey Chestnut, Sonya "The Black Widow" Thomas, Takeru Kobayashi. But that could soon change. In April, Schuyler made headlines from the *Washington Post* to the *Daily Mail* for what is surely one of the greatest competitive eating accomplishments of this young century: eating three 2kg steaks (with sides that included shrimp cocktail, baked potato, salad and a roll) in about 20 minutes. That's a pace of about 300g per minute, more than an average burger every 60 seconds. And don't forget the shrimp cocktail.

The field of Schuyler's dreams was the Big Texan restaurant in Amarillo, which has for decades dared diners to eat a 2kg steak in under an hour – an alimentary accomplishment that would render the meal free and the eater a hero, at least in the Texas Panhandle. Schuyler took only four minutes and 18 seconds to

finish her first 2kg steak during the April 19 event, which you can watch in all its magnificent surreality on YouTube.

Her three-steak carnage far surpassed the performance of the previous champ, hot dog king Joey Chestnut, and broke her own record. But that's not enough for Schuyler. "I gotta go back and do four. Totally doable," she says.

The Big Texan, which has hosted its steak challenge for more than five decades, is owned by the Lee family. One of the proprietors, Bobby Lee, remembers the first challenge in 1960, when Bobby was five and his father was running the joint, which then catered mostly to cowboys. Since then, he has seen about five people a day try to summit Mt Steak, with all too many of their dreams crashing down into a pool of vomit.

"I've never seen anything like that in my life," Lee tells me of Schuyler's performance, which

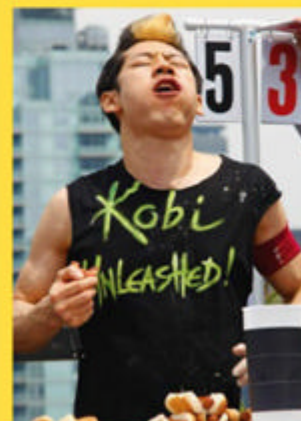
## The chompetition



**Joey Chestnut:** currently ranked World No 1 by the International Federation of Competitive Eating.



**Sonya "The Black Widow" Thomas:** 39 world eating records inc. 46 mince pies in 10 minutes.



**Takeru Kobayashi:** six Guinness Records for hot dogs, meatballs, Twinkies, burgers, pizza and pasta.



Feeding frenzy: Molly Schuyler eats wings this January at Wings 23 in Philadelphia. "I'd put her up against a lion or tiger any day," says one admirer

earned her a \$5,000 prize. "I'd put her up against a lion or tiger any day." Grabbing the medium-rare cuts of top sirloin with her hands, Schuyler tore off hunks of meat and swallowed them without chewing. Lee, who calls Schuyler "totally fearless", says he had both a paramedic and an oral surgeon on hand, in case she choked. "She is not even of this world," Lee says with awe.

Actually, Schuyler is very much of this world. She has four kids - three girls and one boy - the oldest of whom is 11 and the youngest six. Her husband is in the US Air Force, and it is his work that brought her to the Sacramento suburbs, which she calls "miserable". At least eating for a living lets her travel, to make money without having to work, of all places, in a chain restaurant.

Schuyler is a native of Nebraska, "corn and nothing", as she puts it. But it is home, and she yearns to return there one day. Schuyler started eating

competitively about three years ago and signed with All Pro Eating in 2013. Her passion for it has a Midwestern simplicity: "It's free food. I love free food."

At home, she eats like the harried mother she is: in the morning, it's coffee while she gets the kids ready for school; in the afternoon, a lunch of baby carrots as she runs errands; dinner is often "grazing" on the leftovers of her children.

Schuyler is one of several women challenging the notion that competitive eating is a boys' club. In the top echelon of Major League Eating, four of the top 10 eaters in the world are women. Foremost among them is Miki Sudo, who upstaged Thomas, the "Black Widow", at last year's Nathan's hot dog eating contest on Coney Island.

Sudo, whom Schuyler considers a friend, bristles at any gender stereotypes with competitive eating. "There's three men ahead of me," Sudo tells me, "but many, many

behind me." Schuyler, though, admits when she first started eating, she would lose time by repeatedly wiping her face, not wanting to be seen engaging in unladylike behaviour.

Sudo, like Schuyler, is in 55kg range; Thomas weighs even less. None of these women engage in excessive eating outside of competition: Sudo's diet, for example, includes staples like grilled chicken, avocado and kale. As she points out, competitive eating only consumes some 17 days per year. The rest of the time, she is an "incredibly boring" eater.

Still, the binge-eating takes its toll. "There are days you feel like garbage, just absolute garbage," says Sudo, and Schuyler concedes, "You're conditioning your body to do something it wasn't meant to."

What little research on competitive eating does exist indeed suggests it isn't the most beneficial way to spend time. According to research published

in 2007 in the *American Journal of Roentgenology*, "professional speed eaters eventually may develop morbid obesity, profound gastroparesis, intractable nausea and vomiting, and even the need for a gastrectomy".

Schuyler will keep eating as long as she keeps winning and making money. When we met, in mid-May, she was looking forward to a corn-dog eating contest at a county fair, which she figured she would win easily. But she knows that there will come a time when she can no longer eat half a cow in the time it takes a normal human being to brush her teeth. And when that time comes, Schuyler will be ready. As she says, "It's only food."



**By Alexander Nazaryan**

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# WHY THE MIDDLE EAST IS NOT OUR FAULT

A provocative new history turns assumptions on their head by arguing that the region's own politics, not Western intervention, created today's 'well of catastrophe'

## The Tail Wags the Dog

by Efraim Karsh  
Bloomsbury Continuum (€30)



"Contrary to the conventional wisdom," Efraim Karsh tells us early on in his new book on the Middle East, "Britain's 'original sin', if

such was indeed committed, lay not in the breaking up of Middle Eastern unity but in its attempted over-unification."

If Karsh wanted to cause outrage in Middle East Studies departments across the globe it is hard to think of a sentence that would do the job better. Or indeed better sum up his argument. And in this - the skewering of academic and popular orthodoxy through historical analysis - lies the book's overarching goal.

In the Middle East, perhaps

like no other region, history is politics. Conflicting accounts of everything from the foundation of Israel to the imperial powers' creation of the modern Middle East justify atrocity and form the ideological underpinnings of policy. Thus do politicians use the work of historians (like Karsh) to discredit Palestinian claims of expulsion in 1948, while last year the terror group Isis pointedly bulldozed the border between Iraq and Syria to "destroy" the legacy of the 1916 Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement, which it claims created artificial borders all over the modern Middle East.

As a result, the book conducts a broad study of modern Middle Eastern history. From the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the contemporary crisis over Iran's nuclear programme, the book covers many of the region's climacteric events. Karsh's primary concern is agency, ie who is making things happen,

and his answer is that it is the Middle East states themselves. As the opening quotation suggests, his central argument is that the consensus view of the region as having been moulded, to its detriment, by external forces, especially the Great Powers, is false:

Contrary to the common perception of the region's affairs as an offshoot of global power politics, modern Middle Eastern history has been the culmination of long-existing indigenous trends, passions and patterns of behaviour; contrary to their treatment as hapless objects lacking an internal, autonomous dynamic of their own, Middle Easterners have been enterprising free agents doggedly pursuing their national interests and swaying the region pretty much in their desired direction, often in disregard of Great-Power wishes.

While this is probably overstating the case, it contains some truth. The idea in the title *The Tail Wags the Dog* - that weaker, Middle Eastern states have often sculpted their own destiny and on occasion even been able to manipulate the superpowers - is not a new one, and it is correct. During the Cold War, what scholars have termed bipolarity - an international order dominated by two superpowers - enabled smaller, "client" states to play the USSR and the US off against each other as the two fought for influence in the Middle East.

That, in July 1972, Egypt's president Anwar Sadat felt strong enough - despite the huge power disparity between the two states - to expel Soviet personnel from Egypt after Moscow tried to limit the flow of strategic arms into his country says it all. Sadat's subsequent



People power: Iranians rally to Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979

overtures to Western powers amply demonstrated to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev that Egypt had other options; despite Sadat's insult, aid and arms again began flowing into Egypt. The tail did indeed wag the dog.

Karsh also rightly points out the limits of superpower intervention in the Middle East. Just as the US was powerless to stop the 1979 Islamic Revolution toppling its ally the Shah of Iran, the Mujahedeen threw the Soviets out Afghanistan. Despite Washington's 2001 invasion of the same country to destroy the Taliban, the group are arguably now stronger than ever.

Karsh's is a conservative

## Further reading on . . . fighting in the Middle East

**A History of the Arab Peoples** by Albert Hourani. The definitive story of 12 centuries of Arab civilisation. Never bettered.

**Orientalism** by Edward Said. In this seminal text Said argues that Western scholars who study the Muslim Orient have often done so in order to rule and have defined it in terms of being other than the West, and hence inferior.

**Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution** by Nikki Keddie. If you want to understand modern Iran and the birth of the Islamic Republic, which has led to today's nuclear crisis, read this book.

**My Promised Land: the Triumph and Tragedy of Israel** by Ari Shavit. An idiosyncratic, beautifully-written and often personal look at the founding of Israel and its subsequent history.

**Beware of Small States** by David Hirst. Examines how small states like Lebanon can prove the graveyard of larger and more powerful ones.

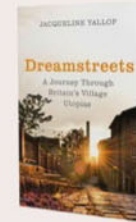
**Gideon's Spies: The Inside Story of Israel's Legendary Secret Service The Mossad** by Gordan Thomas. Reads like a thriller. Thomas delves into the heart of the most secretive, and arguably most effective, intelligence service in the world.

# HOW TO BUILD UTOPIA DESPITE THE PEOPLE

From Prince Charles to pioneer socialists, the idealists who construct model villages have been beset by human imperfection

## Dreamstreets – A Journey through Britain's Village Utopias

by Jacqueline Yallop  
Jonathan Cape (€27)



How do you start a village from scratch? The beauty of British villages is that they are slow-growing organisms,

built up over 1,000 years or more. Build a new settlement now and you come up against accusations of pastiche, as with Poundbury, Prince Charles's development in Dorset. As Jacqueline Yallop explains in this original book, utopias always fall a little short on their promise: partly because they are built in an instant and don't have time to grow naturally; partly because utopias always come up against the inevitable imperfections of everyday human living.

More than 400 of these model villages have been built in Britain. Yallop begins in Cromford, Derbyshire, where, in 1771, Richard Arkwright erected the world's first water-powered cotton mill - and the first purpose-built industrial village.

Cromford worked rather well. Where these planned villages didn't gel so happily is when their developers laid down a philosophy of everyday living. In New Lanark, Scotland, mill manager Robert Owen took over another of Arkwright's industrial projects. His aspirations were admirable - he controlled prices at New Lanark's general store and provided schools - but he also

kept his eye on how much alcohol the workers drank.

An element of paternalist control crept in, morphing into early communism - Owen's dream was that all workers should share labour, machinery and wages equally, all living in one big house. When he introduced the concept to a town he bought in America - Harmony, Indiana - the dream fell apart after four years of constant squabbles over ownership.

Other planned villages worked better, among them Edensor, in Derbyshire. Like that other success, Port Sunlight, built by Lord Leverhulme for his Merseyside soap workers from 1888 onwards, Edensor had the crucial element of variety, with Tudor, Mediterranean and Gothic styles flung together; at Port Sunlight, half-timbered houses stand next to pebbledashed façades and Flemish cottages.

The more variety, the better, but you can't try to conceal the artifice. That's why Portmeirion - Clough Williams-Ellis's 1920s holiday village - works. The whole mad confection of Palladian palaces, rococo arches and Gothic pavilions is so clearly joyful trickery that you have to laugh with it - and love it.

Although well-written, this book is for town-planning obsessives only. But oh how we need some pretty new, planned towns. The answer seems to be: variety, and don't tell people how much to drink.



### By Harry Mount

Author of *Odyssey* - Ancient Greece in the Footsteps of Odysseus

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voice that rejects academic orthodoxy, and that is, to a degree, healthy. And he delights in the display. The book, like almost all of his work, is a polemic, albeit a well-researched and knowledgeable one.

It is also a work of pessimism. Karsh saves most of his ire for US President Barack Obama, whom he accuses of denying the realities of the modern Middle East by favouring not policies but "magic potions [such as] 'more democracy'." As long as both Obama and Middle Easterners refuse to accept that "the main culpability for the region's endemic malaise lies with the local players", the region, he argues, will continue to be a well of catastrophe.

There is truth to this

argument, though as Karsh admits (albeit while, in a feat of dexterous intellectual gymnastics, failing to adequately acknowledge it), external interventions such as the Iraq War have re-ordered and destroyed the region to an extremely high degree.

Nonetheless, the book stands as a welcome correction to some of the most egregious myths about the making of the modern Middle East, and like so many works on the region it is less a history of its politics than a political take on its history.



### By David Patrikarakos

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# PIRATES BATTLE TO STAY AFLOAT

Once at the forefront of European counter-culture, illegal stations are threatened by the internet and the switch to digital – but they are not going without a fight

If you climb through a certain gap in a hedge on the crest of Somerset's Blackdown Hills, in the West of England, you'll stumble onto a crime scene. Tied to a branch in the canopy of a birch tree is the transmitter for Rage FM, Taunton's only pirate radio station. Owning it could get Alfie, the proprietor, two years in prison.

The former BBC Devon employee, 35, isn't worried. Pointing out landmarks around the fields, he looks and sounds like a posh West Country farmer. But to the station's 3,000 listeners, he's their supplier of political polemic, flood warnings and jazz.

"Sometimes I let my daughters do the weather," he says. "But you've got to make sure to pick an easy day. No showers or high pressure banks."

Rage FM is one of around 100 pirate stations in the UK. Illegal broadcasting, once a mainstay of European counter-culture, has long been on the decline – except for the thriving scene in the Netherlands – as digital and internet radio have become more common. But the death of UK pirate radio has been predicted for more than 50 years, since Radio Caroline first transmitted the Beatles and the Kinks from boats off the Essex coast while the BBC refused to play music that wasn't polite, sober and traditional.

After the rock pioneered by Radio Caroline entered the mainstream and the BBC responded by setting up its pop-oriented Radio 1 in 1967, there was a dip in pirate radio's popularity. In the late 1980s and 1990s, however, it was dramatically revived by the advent of rave culture, which made stations that played dance music, such as Kiss FM and Rinse, enormously culturally



significant. Their star DJs, such as Tim Westwood, Danny Rampling and Gilles Peterson, were picked up by Radio 1 to boost its flagging ratings.

But government plans for a "digital switchover" could bring the end for FM radio within two years. Communications minister Ed Vaizey, the driving force behind the campaign, has repeatedly postponed the switch-off date. But with the regulator Ofcom reporting that, in 2014, 48% of listeners had a digital radio in their house, the 50% tipping point that will trigger the switch isn't far away.

The pirates refuse to go quietly and have instead been repopulating the FM dial as traditional stations close down. Unfortunately, their traditional adversary, Ofcom, is just as tenacious. Last year, Ofcom responded to 272 complaints about pirate radio. In 21 cases, it claims, the signal interfered with emergency services, and pirate activity around the council estates of east London recently came close to shutting down City airport.

Alfie denies pirates affect emergency services, most of which run on Airwave, a digital communications system not affected by FM frequencies. Rage FM, he says, provides a

service to the community. During the floods of 2013, Alfie broadcast updates on road closures in the Somerset levels. He recently announced a woman had lost her dog in a dangerous part of Taunton.

Ofcom is not amused. Clive Corrie, head of enforcement, believes the crime deserves the stiff sentences: two years in prison and/or an unlimited fine. "Pirates have a feeling they're doing something for the right reason," he says. "But that really isn't the truth ... the interference they cause can have a severe impact on public safety." Piracy, Ofcom says, is also linked to other crimes: firearms and narcotics are routinely uncovered in raids and violence is common.

In London, Lady Diamond is battling that perception. The 33-year-old West End jazz singer-turned-pirate, pictured above, is incredibly well spoken, with cut-glass vowels. "I am not a criminal," she says. "And I resent the attempt to make me one." In legal radio, she says, "You're separated from your

audience. You're not playing what people want to hear." She laughs when I ask if she'd want to play on mainstream radio. "Radio 1? I don't know if I'd take it. There's something exciting about being on here."

Many pirates also reject internet radio, the legal and cost-free alternative, as too anonymous – a lacklustre alternative to their dedicated following on the FM airwaves. For Lady Diamond, it holds little appeal. Both the subversive thrill and cultural heritage of playing on pirate radio are part of the pirates' fascination – and the reason why they're willing the digital switchover to be delayed still further.

"It's an important tradition," Alfie says as we climb back through the hole in the hedge. "It's not something you can just take away."



**By Louise Callaghan**

Foreign reporter for The Sunday Times and lifelong pirate radio devotee

@louiseelisabet



On the air at sea: DJ Robbie Dale on Radio Caroline in 1967

GETTY: CAROLINA AGUIRRE BARRANDEGUY

# ITALY'S NEGLECTED CORNUCOPIA

In undistinguished towns and unknown churches, the peninsula owns most of the entire world's cultural patrimony. In Umbria, I stumbled upon a dazzling example



**Harry Eyres**

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We had half an hour before the concert began, a music critic friend and I, in an obscure Umbrian hill-town I'd vaguely heard of but never visited before. After wandering through medieval streets of warm, terracotta-coloured brick, we found ourselves in the irregular, sloping main square in front of a higgledy-piggledy cathedral. We pushed rather tentatively at the wooden doors, not knowing if this ancient place of worship would still be open at nearly 8pm. It was.

In front of us, above the main altar, was a painting of startling chromatic magnificence, not a painting either of us culture vultures had known existed, but one worth making a journey for, perhaps several journeys. The Madonna in Glory - with the protector Saints Gervasio and Protasio, Saints Peter and Paul, a couple of angels, a few putti and the pennants of the city for good measure - glows with the extraordinary brightness of the colours the artist applied to the wooden panels in 1514 (the painting is signed and dated).

We spent many minutes transfixed by this masterwork. The Madonna in Glory is a symphony of blues and reds; the red of the Madonna's dress and the blue of her cloak rhyme with the blues and reds of the tunics worn by the two absurdly youthful and beautiful protector saints, and the vermilion of the proud city banners. There's a freshness about the altarpiece



**On location: Perugino's Madonna in Glory, in Città della Pieve**

which belies its 500 years, as if the high noon of European painting had been preserved, forever young.

The artist is Pietro Vannucci, known as Perugino, born in this town, Città della Pieve, around 1446. Perugino is of course in the second division of Italian renaissance artists

(but what a league that was), and Città della Pieve in the second or even third division of central Italian hill-towns. Surely if Città della Pieve was in any country other than Italy, the lovely and well-preserved medieval settlement would be on any number of tourist itineraries. And incidentally, the Madonna in Glory is not even the best-known Perugino here; that is the Adoration of the Magi in the Oratory of Santa Maria dei Bianchi.

Italy has the highest number of Unesco World Heritage sites of any country; it also has the highest number of world "cultural" sites, at 46. These figures do not convey the

staggering wealth of Italy's heritage; there are 20 national museums in France, but 400 in Italy. Italy has between 350,000 and 400,000 protected buildings, compared with 25,000 in France. Some reckon that Italy contains 70% of the world's cultural heritage.

This overwhelming richness is treated with staggering indifference by the Italian authorities. Every year bits of the heritage crumble to dust or disappear. Recent examples include the collapse of the House of the Gladiators in Pompeii and chunks of marble falling off the Colosseum and the Trevi fountain in Rome.

"Italy has never spent enough on culture," according to Roberto Cecchi, Under-Secretary at Italy's culture ministry. That may be an understatement; the Italian culture budget shrank by a third under Berlusconi and a recent report stated that Italy only spends 0.2% of its GDP on culture compared with France's 1%.

There is currently an attempt to make up the shortfall using private sponsorship. Shoe chain Tod's contributed €30m to clean up the Colosseum. Fendi is paying €2m to restore the Trevi fountain and Diesel have given €5m to help repair the Rialto bridge in Venice.

You may bridle at the idea of the Tod's Colosseum but perhaps the means don't matter so much; the important thing is to preserve and protect what may be an *embarras de richesses* to the authorities, but is a wonder and a glory to all humanity. What is so special about Italy's heritage is that so much, like Perugino's Madonna, remains exactly where it has always been. May that ever be so.



**This overwhelming richness is treated with staggering indifference by the Italian authorities**



# MY WEEKEND: HERBERT HAINER

The Adidas CEO, a former amateur player, mixes business with pleasure by watching the football. And the rugby. And tennis. And golf, basketball, athletics...

## Friday evening

On Fridays after work, I mostly stay right here at our campus in Herzogenaurach. We have a great running track as well as a gym, and I usually do both, around 30-45 minutes on the running track and 30 minutes in the gym. We also have a team of personal trainers here who help you. Many of our employees use the exercise facilities. Especially for a sports company like us, it makes perfect sense to have fitness facilities on campus. Sometimes I try out our new shoes on my training runs.

I live in Herzogenaurach, so if I don't go running after work I head home. On Friday nights my wife and I often go to a local restaurant. There are many excellent ones here.

## Saturday daytime

In the sports business, you can't really speak of weekends, because that's when most sports events take place. On most weekends I do go to a sports event, usually a football game. I go to Bayern Munich's games, of course, because theirs is the closest stadium. But I watch many other clubs' games as well, including Schalke 04 or Hamburg in Germany, Real Madrid, Chelsea or AC Milan. I absolutely don't mind, though.

I'm a huge football fan and



Hainer: "I'm in the very fortuitous position that my hobby is also my job"

played for FC Dingolfing as a young man. One of my brothers was a professional footballer, and my other brother played as well. Another plus of my job is that I get to talk to the clubs' presidents and managers at games and other events, which is very stimulating. I'm in the very fortuitous position that my hobby is also my job. I didn't plan it that way but now I'm loving the chance to engage with sports in both capacities.

But it doesn't stop at football. I am interested in all

sports and follow how the teams and athletes that endorse our products are doing in basketball, golf, track and field, tennis, rugby - you name it.

And, because of the weekend sports events, I spend a lot of the weekend travelling. On the aeroplane I use the opportunity to think. Of course, the thinking doesn't wait until the weekend, but I find that the time spent up in the air lends itself particularly well to brainstorming.

## Curriculum vitae

Hainer joined Adidas in 1987 after spending eight years in several management positions at Procter & Gamble. He would have loved to become a professional footballer, but wasn't "quite good enough". Instead, he is supervisory board chairman at FC Bayern Munich.

WOLFGANG SAWALL/REUTERS

## Sunday

Then on Sunday mornings I go running again. We have parks that are very good for running near our house, and there's also a forest. I do my 45 minutes again. The afternoons are taken up by sports events, of course, and around six I start my preparations for the coming week, reading reports and presentations. And then the week starts again.

It's a very sports-filled weekend, but I don't complain! My wife is understanding, too, and she's actually an enthusiastic football fan in her own right. As an aspiring young player in the 1970s I'd never thought that I'd be in this lucky position to combine my passion for sport and the business so perfectly.

As told to Elisabeth Braw

## NEWS WEEKS PAST 11 JUNE 1956

### The master of ceremonies

One of TV's newest cynosures is a penguin-fat man with a pendulous nose, gimlet eyes and a lower lip like a battered sugar scoop. As MC of his own show, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, he has been slumping onto US home screens to the tune of Gounod's

*Funeral March of a Marionette*, giving viewers a supercilious glare and delivering uncommonly sharp remarks aimed at everyone - particularly his sponsor (Bristol-Myers).

"When I was a young man, I had an uncle who frequently took me out to dinner," he is wont to



say in what has been described as a California cockney drawl. "He always accompanied these dinners with minutely detailed stories about himself. But I listened - because he was paying for dinner. I don't know why I am reminded of this but we are about to have one of our commercials."



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